MONTANA'S REVISED CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2025

MCA 61-9-419 DEFINITIONS
MCA 61-9-420 STANDARDS
MCA 61-9-421 EXEMPTIONS

UNDER AGE 2

Must ride rear-facing in a car seat that meets federal standards

AGES 2 - 4

Rear- or forward-facing car seat with internal harness

AGES 4 - 8

Forward-facing car seat or booster seat

AGE 9+

May use booster seat until outgrown height and weight limits and then move to a vehicle seat belt

- Parents and caregivers may choose to keep children in each stage longer for best practice protection and pre-crash positioning
- Fine of $100, with a 7-day waiver if seat is acquired or installed correctly. Proof provided to court of jurisdiction
- Exemptions include motor home, bus, taxi, ambulance, emergency vehicle, or for a child who because of physical or medical condition or body size can not be placed in a restraint system

SCAN ME
Find a Certified Car Seat Technician

- ✓ Child's head is at least 1" below top of car seat
- ✓ Harness straps are AT OR BELOW child's shoulders
- ✓ Chest clip is buckled and at armpit level
- ✓ Harness straps are snug: can't pinch a fold in webbing

- ✓ Harness straps are AT OR ABOVE child's shoulders
- ✓ Chest clip is buckled and at armpit level
- ✓ Harness straps are snug: can't pinch a fold in webbing
- ✓ Hook and tighten the car seat's top tether strap (upper right image)

tether strap attaches to designated anchor

- ✓ Shoulder belt lies diagonally across middle of chest and shoulder
- ✓ Lap belt lies on upper thighs, not the stomach and is snug
- ✓ Seat belts go under the booster's armrests
- ✓ Seat belt should be flat with no twists

- ✓ Shoulder belt lies across middle of the chest and shoulder, not on the neck
- ✓ Lap belt lies on the upper thighs, not stomach
- ✓ Typically between 8-12 years of age. Kids should also be able to pass the 5-step test
- ✓ Kids should ride in the back seat until they are at least 13 years old

SCAN ME
Ultimate Carseat Guide

THE 5-STEP TEST

The 5-Step Test is a way to know when a child can ride without a booster seat. A child can safely ride on the vehicle seat with the lap and shoulder belt when the child can do ALL 5 steps.

1. The child sits all the way back against the vehicle seat
2. Their knees bend over the edge of the vehicle seat
3. The lap belt fits snugly across the hips near the top of the thighs, *NOT THE ABDOMEN*
4. The shoulder belt snugly crosses the center of the chest & shoulder, *NOT THE NECK*
5. The child sits correctly, without slouching, for the entire ride