

321.446 Child restraint devices.

1. a. A child under one year of age and weighing less than twenty pounds who is being transported in a motor vehicle subject to registration, except a school bus or motorcycle, shall be secured during transit in a rear-facing child restraint system that is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

b. A child under six years of age who does not meet the description in paragraph "a" and who is being transported in a motor vehicle subject to registration, except a school bus or motorcycle, shall be secured during transit by a child restraint system that is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

2. A child at least six years of age but under eighteen years of age who is being transported in a motor vehicle subject to registration, except a school bus or motorcycle, shall be secured during transit by a child restraint system that is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or by a safety belt or safety harness of a type approved under section 321.445.

3. This section does not apply to the following:

a. Peace officers acting on official duty.

b. The transportation of children in 1965 model year or older vehicles, authorized emergency vehicles, buses, or motor homes, except when a child is transported in a motor home's passenger seat situated directly to the driver's right.

c. The transportation of a child who has been certified by a physician licensed under chapter 148 as having a medical, physical, or mental condition that prevents or makes inadvisable securing the child in a child restraint system, safety belt, or safety harness.

d. A back seat occupant of a motor vehicle for whom no safety belt is available because all safety belts are being used by other occupants or cannot be used due to the use of a child restraint system in the seating position for which a belt is provided.

4. A person who violates this section is guilty of a simple misdemeanor punishable as a scheduled violation under section 805.8A, subsection 14, paragraph "c". Violations shall be charged as follows:

a. An operator who transports a passenger under fourteen years of age in violation of subsection 1 or 2 may be charged with a violation of this section.

b. If a passenger fourteen years of age or older is unable to properly fasten a seatbelt due to a temporary or permanent disability, an operator who transports such a person in violation of subsection 2 may be charged with a violation of this section. Otherwise, a passenger fourteen years of age or older who violates subsection 2 shall be charged in lieu of the operator.

c. If a child under fourteen years of age, or a child fourteen years of age or older who is unable to fasten a seatbelt due to a temporary or permanent disability, is being transported in a taxicab in a manner that is not in compliance with subsection 1 or 2, the parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult traveling with the child shall be served with a citation for a violation of this section in lieu of the taxicab operator. Otherwise, if a passenger being transported in the taxicab is fourteen years of age or older, the citation shall be served on the passenger in lieu of the taxicab operator.

5. A person who is first charged for a violation of subsection 1 and who has not purchased or otherwise acquired a child restraint system shall not be convicted if the person produces in court, within a reasonable time, proof that the person has purchased or otherwise acquired a child restraint system which meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

6. Failure to use a child restraint system, safety belts, or safety harnesses as required by this section does not constitute negligence nor is the failure admissible as evidence in a civil action.

7. For purposes of this section, "*child restraint system*" means a specially designed seating system, including a belt-positioning seat or a booster seat, that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards set forth in 49 C.F.R. § 571.213.

84 Acts, ch 1016, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1069, §1; 2000 Acts, ch 1133, §11; 2001 Acts, ch 132, §11; 2001 Acts, ch 137, §5; 2004 Acts, ch 1113, §2, 3; 2005 Acts, ch 8, §32; 2008 Acts, ch 1088, §123; 2010 Acts, ch 1186, §8, 9