

# Child seats: Are you breaking the law?

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Less than 10% of South African families use child car seats. That's according to the AA. Parents and caretakers of infants should be aware that since May 2015, it is illegal to have a child under the age of three unrestrained in your vehicle.



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The Medical Research Council has frequently stated the [leading cause of death in children](#) under the age of five; car crashes.

You may have stolen a glance at the cars around you in morning traffic. If so, you're bound to find children jumping around inside the car or standing on the front seat. Not only are these unrestrained children at major risk in the event of a collision, but in many cases they're so distracting that they, in fact, cause accidents.

We took a look at the laws surrounding these car seats and how to choose the best one for your child.

According to Regulation 213 of the National Road Traffic Act, the driver of a vehicle must ensure a child on a seat of the motor vehicle uses an appropriate child restraint. If no child restraint is available, the child must wear a seatbelt if an unoccupied seat, which is fitted with a seatbelt, is available.

This legislation does not apply to transport via minibus taxis or conventional buses.

Failure to adhere to these rules could result in [substantial fines](#). Due to the high road fatality rate, though, there has been a recent push (particularly in the Western Cape) to enforce even stricter punishments. This includes jail time.

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