

New Michigan child restraint law goes into effect July 1, 2008

Measure will enhance safety of children

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has signed legislation that will require the use of approved booster seats for children who are both under eight years old and less than four feet nine inches tall. Current law requires children under age four to ride in a car seat. The new law extends the requirement to include older children who are also not optimally protected by seat belts alone.

The new law will take effect July 1, 2008 and will be a primary enforcement law. This type of law allows officers to stop a driver for that violation alone and issue a ticket for each improperly restrained child. Violators will face a fine of up to \$65.

Proper restraint use is critical since motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Michigan children. Research has shown that the risk of injury for children ages 4-8 is reduced by 59 percent when using a booster seat versus a seat belt alone. Seat belts are designed for adults and don't fit children correctly. Children in seat belts are 4 times more likely to suffer head/brain injury as compared to those in booster seats.

Michigan joins 43 other states by adopting an expanded child passenger safety law. States that have passed similar laws have seen child restraint use increase dramatically. For more information, go to www.michigansafekids.org.

