1 Child Safety in cars

Information and Recommendations

Important to keep in mind:

1. Children should face their backs in the direction of travel at least until they are 15 months old and 76 cm tall. However, it is recommended that children face against the direction of travel for much longer, as this position protects the child's head and neck much better.
2. A child under 150 cm in height is not allowed to sit in the front seat in front of an active airbag.
3. A child under 135 cm in height must always use safety and protective equipment suitable for their height and weight. A seat belt alone is not considered adequate for the child.
4. The child's head must never rise above the edge of the car seat.
5. The seat belt must not be twisted and should fit snugly to the child's body. Never place the belt behind the back or under the arm.
6. The safety equipment must suit both the child and the car. It is recommended to visit a specialized store and ideally have the child with you to fit the seat. To ensure the seat fits the car and is correctly installed, follow the manufacturer's instructions for the seat and the car's manual.
7. Most child car seats have a lifespan of 10 years, but infant car seats usually only last 5 years. The year of manufacture of the seat is usually indicated on the bottom of the seat. If you buy or borrow a used car seat, it is important to make sure that the seat has not been damaged or bumped.
8. New seats must comply with the European standard R129 (i-Size). Older seats that comply with previous standards may still be used until their lifespan ends.

Must Comply with European Standards

Child car seats in use in Iceland must comply with European standards, either under Regulation R44/04 or Regulation R129 (i-Size). R129 is the newer, safer standard and is the only one allowed for sale in Iceland. Some existing seats comply with the older R44/04 standard and may still be used until their lifespan ends.

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Further information

Key Features of R129 Are as Follows:

- Improved impact measurement and analysis during collisions.*
- Seats are now tested for side impacts, which was not required under R44/04.
- All infant seats now include ISOFIX equipment, which secures the seat in the car and reduces the likelihood of incorrect installation.
- Children must face rearward until at least 15 months of age and 76 cm in height. However, it is recommended that children remain rear-facing much longer.
- Seats are now categorized by the child's height rather than solely by weight. However, R129 seats still have a maximum weight limit that must be observed.

* *Seats are now tested with a Q-dummy featuring 32 sensors that measure movements forward, backward, and sideways, compared to the older P-dummy with only four sensors measuring forward and backward movements.*

Why Rear-Facing Seats?

Rear-facing seats are much safer for children than forward-facing ones. In most traffic accidents, the vehicle is impacted from the front, meaning that in rear-facing seats, the child's head is cushioned by the seat. In forward-facing seats, however, the child's head and body are thrown forward. While the belts restrain the body effectively, the head and neck are relatively unprotected in comparison to rear-facing seats.

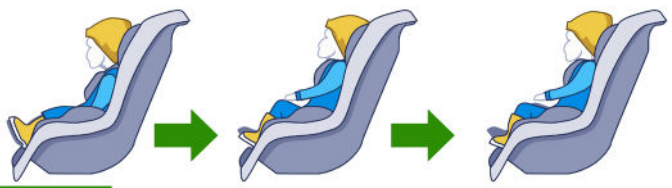
Regulation:

For further details, refer to the Regulation on the Use of Safety and Protective Equipment in Vehicles on the Icelandic Transport Authority's website under the "Laws and Regulations" section. Regulation Link

Comparison of forward- and rear-facing child car seats

Forward-facing

In traditional forward-facing child car seats, children are more vulnerable to injury in a frontal collision. There is a much greater chance of neck and brain injuries.



Rear facing

Rear-facing child car seats protect the child better in the event of a frontal collision. They protect the child's head, neck and spine better, as the force of the impact is distributed to the chair.

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