

## 1. Overview

You must wear a seat belt if one is fitted in the seat you're using - there are only a few exceptions.

You're also only allowed 1 person in each seat fitted with a seat belt.

Children must use the correct car seat for their weight until they reach 135 centimetres tall or their 12th birthday, whichever is first.

**You can be fined up to £500 if you don't wear a seat belt when you're supposed to!**

## 2. When you don't need to wear a seat belt

You don't need to wear a seat belt if you're:

- a driver who is reversing, or supervising a learner driver who is reversing
- in a vehicle being used for police, fire and rescue services
- a passenger in a trade vehicle and you're investigating a fault
- driving a goods vehicle on deliveries that is travelling no more than 50 metres between stops
- a licensed taxi driver who is 'plying for hire' or carrying passengers

## Medical exemptions

Your doctor may say you don't have to wear a seat belt for a medical reason. They'll give you a 'Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing'. You must:

- keep this in your vehicle
- show it to the police if you're stopped
- You'll also need to tell your car insurer.

Talk to your doctor for more information and read 'medical exemptions from compulsory seat belt wearing'.

### Wearing a seat belt while pregnant

You must wear a seat belt if you're pregnant, unless your doctor says you don't have to for medical reasons.

### Wearing a seat belt if you're disabled

You must wear a seat belt if you're a disabled driver or passenger, unless you don't have to for medical reasons. You may need to adapt your vehicle.

## 3. If your vehicle doesn't have seat belts

If your vehicle doesn't have seat belts, for example it's a classic car, you aren't allowed to carry any children under 3 years old in it.

Children over 3 are only allowed to sit in the back seats.

These rules only apply if your vehicle was originally made without seat belts.

## Using a child car seat or booster seat

Children must normally use a child car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm tall, whichever comes first.

Only EU-approved child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle.

You can choose a child car seat based on your child's height or weight.

### Height-based car seats

Height-based car seats are known as 'i-Size' seats. They must be rear-facing until your child is over 15 months old. Your child can use a forward-facing car seat when they're over 15 months old.

You must check the seat to make sure it's suitable for the height of your child.

### Weight-based car seats

Weight-based car seats must be rear-facing until your child weighs more than 9kg.

Which seat they use after then will depend on their weight.

Child's weight	Car seat
9kg to 18kg	Rear or forward-facing baby seat
15kg to 25kg	Rear or forward-facing child seat (booster seat)
Over 22kg	Booster cushion

## Fitting a child car seat

You must:

- only use a child car seat if your car's seat belt has a diagonal strap - unless the car seat is specifically designed for use with a lap seat belt
- deactivate any front airbags before fitting a rear-facing baby seat in a front seat
- not fit a child car seat in side-facing seats

## Children with disabilities

The same rules apply for children with disabilities unless a doctor says they're exempt on medical grounds. They can also use a disabled person's seat belt or child restraint designed for their needs.

## Minibuses

Minibus drivers and companies don't have to provide child car seats. You must provide your own if you want to make sure a child has one.

Children 3 and older must:

- use a child car seat if there's one available in a minibus
- use an adult seat belt if child seats are not fitted or are unsuitable

All children must travel in rear seats (i.e. any seats behind the driver) if a child car seat or an adult seat belt isn't fitted.

## 2. When a child can travel without a car seat

A child can travel without a child car seat in some circumstances.

### Taxis and minicabs (private hire vehicles)

In a licensed taxi or minicab:

- children under 3 years of age can travel without a child's car seat or seat belt, but only on the back seat
- children aged 3 years or older can travel without a child's car seat if they wear an adult seat belt

### Unexpected journeys

If the correct child seat isn't available, a child over 3 years of age can use an adult seat belt if the journey is all of the following:

- unexpected
- necessary
- over a short distance

You can't take children under 3 in a vehicle without a seat belt or the correct child car seat (except a taxi or minicab).

### No room for a third child seat

Children under 3 must be in a child car seat. If there's no room for a third child seat in the back of the vehicle, the child must travel in the front seat with the correct child seat.

Children over 3 years can sit in the back using an adult belt.

### Vehicles without seat belts

Children under 3 must be in a child car seat. If there's no seat belt, they can't travel.

A child over 3 can travel in a back seat without a car seat and without a seat belt if the vehicle doesn't have one.