

Friday 3 May 2019

CHILDREN MUST BE RESTRAINED – KNOW THE RULES

A number of drivers made the headlines for all the wrong reasons over the recent double demerit periods, with several drivers receiving enough demerit points to have their licence suspended twice over.

A woman stopped on Easter Monday at Ourimbah on the Central Coast after police noticed she was using a mobile phone received 28 demerit points, a man stopped for a random breath test in Sydney's south-west on the Saturday after Anzac Day received 33 demerit points and on the same day a woman in Moree in the state's north received 24 demerit points.

The common factor in the multiple infringements issued to these drivers was they all received infringements relating to unrestrained or not properly restrained children (three, five and four children respectively). The penalty for this offence is a \$337 fine and three demerit points. However as the double demerit scheme applies to these offences the penalty was six demerit points for each child.

The use of child restraints is to keep our children safe. All children must be safely fastened in the correct child car seat for their age and size. A child who is properly secured in an approved child car seat is less likely to be injured or killed in a car crash than one who is not.

The national child restraint laws are:

- Children up to the age of six months must be secured in an approved rearward facing restraint
- Children aged from six months old but under four years old must be secured in either a rear or forward facing approved child restraint with an inbuilt harness
- Children under four years old cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows
- Children aged from four years old but under seven years old must be secured in a forward facing approved child restraint with an inbuilt harness or an approved booster seat
- Children aged from four years old but under seven years old cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than seven years in an approved child restraint or booster seat
- Children aged from seven years old but under 16 years old who are too small to be restrained by a seatbelt properly adjusted and fastened are strongly recommended to use an approved booster seat
- Children in booster seats must be restrained by a suitable lap and sash type approved seatbelt that is properly adjusted and fastened, or by a suitable approved child safety harness that is properly adjusted and fastened.

If your child is too small for the child restraint specified for their age, they should be kept in their current child restraint until it is safe for them to move to the next level. If your child is too large for the child restraint specified for their age, they may move to the next level of child restraint.

Questions that are commonly asked are 'when can I move my child to the next type of car seat?' and 'can my child sit in the front seat?' Every child is different, but as a general guide you

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should only move your child to the next level of protection when they no longer fit in their current child car seat. A child aged seven years and over can legally sit in the front seat of a car when using a suitable booster seat or properly adjusted seatbelt. However it is recommended that children remain sitting in the back seat until they're at least 12.

There are many other questions including children travelling in taxis or hire cars, vehicles with only one row of seats such as utes and carrying four or more children. For more information visit www.childcarseats.com.au or contact Council's Road Safety Officer on 02 6959 5510.



Photo caption: Children should move to the next type of restraint when they no longer fit in their current child car seat and should sit in the back until they are over 12 years.

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