



Problem solvers

Are you facing a community transport problem? Perhaps you're assessing the implications of recent legislation or considering the specifications of a new vehicle. Perhaps you're considering your drivers' qualifications and your insurance requirements.

Whatever your community transport poser, *CTA Journal* can help. Problem solvers like Amanda Eastwood, this issue's author (pictured), belong to the CTA's advice and information team. Every day they field enquiries from across the UK's community

transport sector and have a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw upon.

If you have a problem that you'd like to see solved on this page, please write to Problem Solvers at *CTA Journal*, Unit 4, 25a Vyner Street, London E2 9DG.

"Can you tell us if the new regulations regarding child car seats mean that we have to provide child seats, booster cushions and the like for child passengers in our minibuses?"

Following a consultation in June 2005, child car seat regulations will apply to cars, vans, goods vehicles and ~~small minibuses (ie those with an unladen weight (ULW) of 2,540kg or less)~~. They will therefore have an impact on schemes that operate cars (including MPVs) and ~~small minibuses~~ when they are introduced in September 2006.

The law will require children travelling in cars and MPVs to use an appropriate child restraint or adult seat belt. Baby seats must not be used where an activated airbag is fitted and children cannot be carried in the front seat unless they are either using a child restraint or an adult seat belt.

Child restraints are categorised according to the weight of the children for whom they are suitable. These correspond broadly to different age groups, but it is the weight of the child that is most important when deciding what type of child restraint to use.

Baby seats: Rear-facing. For children up to 13kgs (approx newborns to 9-12 months).

Child seats: Forward-facing. For children 9kgs to 18kgs (approx 9 months to 4 years).

Child car seats: use and responsibility for use

	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt must be worn if fitted		Driver
Child under 3 years of age	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used. If not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained	Driver
Child aged 3-11 and under 1.35 metres (approx. 4ft 5in) in height	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult belt if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a taxi, the correct child restraint is not available; • on a short and occasional trip, the correct child restraint is not available • two occupied child restraints prevent the installation of a third 	Driver
Child aged 12 or 13, or over 1.35 metres (approx. 4ft 5in) in height	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Adult seat belt must be worn if fitted	Driver
Adult passenger (ie 14 years or over)	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	Passenger

Booster seats: For children 15kgs to 25kgs (approx 4 to 6 years).

Booster cushions: For children 6 years plus.

In addition to the legal penalties, failure to wear a seat belt or ensure that a child passenger uses an appropriate restraint could affect claims on your motor insurance.

Legislation is being introduced later this year to make it compulsory for seat belts, where fitted, to be worn by all bus

and coach passengers. At present the law does not require children to wear seat belts in the rear of larger minibuses (ie those heavier than 2,540kg (ULW)) or coaches. However, the CTA recommends that best practice should prevail. If seat belts are fitted they should be used and community transport schemes should investigate ways of complying with the forthcoming legislation, by providing booster seats for their minibuses or specifying 'all age' seat belts when purchasing new vehicles. ■

The CTA advice and information service

The CTA's advice and information service covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. There's also more information and advice on the CTA's website, www.ctauk.org. To contact an expert adviser, telephone 0845 130 6195, or email adviceuk@ctauk.org (England and Wales), advicescot@ctauk.org (Scotland), adviceNI@ctauk.org (Northern Ireland) and CTAIS@eircom.net (Republic of Ireland).

More information

THINK! Update on new child car seat regulations www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_611257.hcsp

Child Car Seats
www.childcarseats.org.uk