

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
July 17, 2017

For More Information, Contact:
Dawn Mayer
Child Passenger Safety Program
Phone: 701.328.4536
Email: drmayer@nd.gov

Changes to North Dakota's Child Passenger Safety Law Effective August 1, 2017 *More Children Will Be Required To Ride in a Car Seat or Booster Seat*

BISMARCK, N.D. – More children in North Dakota soon will be riding safely because of changes in the state's child passenger safety law. Effective August 1, children younger than eight years of age will be required to ride in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat) unless they are 4'9" tall or greater. The restraints must be used correctly – following the manufacturer's instructions. Children ages eight through 17 must be properly secured in a seat belt (or restraint, if needed). The law carries a penalty of \$25 and one point against the driver's license.

According to Dawn Mayer, director of the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Child Passenger Safety Program, "This revision basically extends the time a child is required to ride in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat) by one year." Child restraints offer more protection for children than just seat belts. Most children at age seven should be riding in a booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt because they are not tall enough to ride in a seat belt.

Booster seats are belt positioning devices that help position the lap and shoulder belt safely across a child's body – low on the hips and centered across the chest. It is required to use both the lap and shoulder seat belt when using a booster seat.

Booster seats come in two general types – backless boosters and high-back boosters. High-back boosters are recommended if the vehicle seatback does not offer head protection (meaning the vehicle seat back is lower than passenger's ears).

-continued-

The NDDoH recommends all children younger than 13 years ride in the back seat. Follow these best practices when it comes to transporting children of all sizes:

- **Rear-Facing:** Children should ride rear-facing until at least two years of age (following car seat instructions) or until the upper size limits of the car seat.
- **Forward-Facing:** When children are at least two years of age or have outgrown the highest rear-facing size limits of their car seat, they may ride forward-facing in a car seat with a harness. Use the seat until the child reaches the harness's highest size limit allowed by the manufacturer.
- **Boosters:** When children have outgrown the harness in their forward-facing car seat, they may utilize a booster seat. Children should be at least 40 pounds and at least four years of age. Keep children in boosters until about 4'9" tall.
- **Seat Belt:** When children have outgrown their booster seat, they may use a seat belt when it fits over their body correctly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs and be centered across the shoulder and chest. It should not lie on the stomach or across the neck.

A fact sheet for the public explaining the revised law and child passenger best practices for transporting children is available on the Department of Health's website at ndhealth.gov/injuryprevention/childpassenger.

For more information, contact Dawn Mayer with the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.4536 or 800.472.2286.

– end –

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.health.nd.gov/news-media/news-releases.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ndhealth or Twitter at twitter.com/nddoh.