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### **NEW CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS TO PROTECT OUR KIDS**

The Rann Government is further strengthening its commitment to road safety by adopting new nationally approved changes for the use of child restraints in motor vehicles from July 1 this year.

Road Safety Minister, Jack Snelling says the new laws represent significant changes that will provide greater protection for children travelling in vehicles and will go a long way towards reducing road trauma.

“Unfortunately, nearly 60 children under 12 years of age are either killed or seriously injured in crashes on South Australian roads every year, and more than a third of those casualties are just 7 years of age or younger,” Mr Snelling said.

“Around a quarter of those seriously injured were not wearing a child restraint at the time of the crash.

“Research also suggests that children are being moved into bigger seats – or are prematurely graduating to seatbelts – when this is not appropriate for their size.

“The new laws will reduce the risk of injury caused by the use of unsuitable restraints for a child’s size by specifying the type of restraint to be used at different ages and where children must be seated in a vehicle.

“They will also provide parents and carers with the advice and clarification they need about what type of restraint provides the best safety benefit for their children,” Mr Snelling said.

The changes to the Australian Road Rules will introduce a mandatory size appropriate restraint system for all children up to the age of seven.

Specifically, the new laws will require children:

- Up to the age of six months to be restrained in a rear facing child restraint (e.g. infant capsule)
- From six months until the age of four to be restrained in either a rear or forward facing child restraint (i.e. child safety seat) and
- From four years until the age of seven to be restrained in either a forward facing child restraint or booster seat restrained by a correctly adjusted and fastened seatbelt or child safety harness.

The new laws also deal with the issue of children sitting in the front seat of a vehicle.

- Children aged between four and seven will not be permitted to sit in the front seat, unless all other seat positions are already occupied by children under seven.
- Children up to four years must be restrained in the rear of the vehicle (where the vehicle has two or more rows of seats)

A provision will be included in the new laws to ensure a child is not required to use a restraint unsuitable for their size and weight. For example, a child who is too tall or heavy for the restraint must use a restraint for the next age category.

Mr Snelling said the new laws would come into effect on July 1 this year.

“Many parents are already aware of the changes and have already taken steps to make their own arrangements.

“We’re now starting a three month print and radio publicity campaign to remind all parents about the changes to laws in the lead-up to July 1 and beyond.

“The simple fact is seatbelts and child restraints save lives and can reduce the trauma of crashes dramatically. Nothing else offers the same level of crash protection for babies and young children as a properly fitted child restraint,” Mr Snelling said.

By law, drivers are responsible for ensuring that they and any other passengers in the vehicle are appropriately restrained, regardless of their age.

“Drivers will receive an ‘on-the-spot fine’ of either \$240 or \$292 and between three to five demerit points if passengers, including children, are not wearing a seatbelt or a suitable approved child restraint.

“However, once the laws take effect from July 1, there’ll be a three month grace period for drivers before police start enforcing the new rules,” Mr Snelling said.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions about the new child restraint laws is available to download from the following websites: [www.sa.gov.au/restraints](http://www.sa.gov.au/restraints) and [raa.com.au](http://raa.com.au) or phone 132324 for further information.