

What do I need to know about car seat expiration?

Due to changes in vehicles, regulations, new technology, and general wear and tear, we recommend that a car seat be replaced on or before the "Do Not Use After" date. Graco® stamps expiration timing information into the bottom/back of each car seat so you know how long the seat is safe to use. Expiration dates can range anywhere from six to ten years after the date of manufacture depending on the car seat so it is important to check the Date of Manufacture on the white serial number label on your seat.

Used or expired car seats can be dangerous, especially if you do not know the car seat's history. Once the seat has expired, check to see if there is a recycling center in your area. If throwing the seat away, you should first take measures to make the seat unusable by cutting the harness straps, removing the seat cover, and by writing "DO NOT USE/EXPIRED" on the seat. Graco® car seats are not recyclable.

What can I use to clean my car seat harness straps?

Graco allows the use of mild or gentle soap and wet wipes to clean your car seat harness straps.

If you choose mild or gentle soap, take a soft cloth and wet it in a bowl with warm water and mild or gentle soap. The cloth should be damp, not dripping, to surface wash the harness straps. After cleaning the harness straps, let them air dry.

If you choose mild or gentle wet wipes, gently rub the wipes directly on the harness webbing. After cleaning the harness straps, let them air dry.

Things to Remember...

- DO NOT use a hairdryer, an iron or any other heating product to dry the harness.
- DO NOT immerse the harness straps or latch strap in water.
- DO NOT use bleach, abrasive sponges like scrubbing or brillo pads, or cleaning solutions that are not labeled "gentle" or "mild." Doing so over time may tear, break or weaken the fibers of the straps.
- Inspect the harness for damage, there should be no cuts or excessive fraying of the fibers visible to the unaided eye. If the harness straps or LATCH belt are frayed or heavily soiled and they are no longer useable, contact Consumer Services at 1-800-345-4109.

Can I use an inflatable seat belt to install my car seat?

"Graco has analyzed recent testing conducted by the Ford Motor Company on its inflatable seat belt system. Based on the data, Graco updated its car seat recommendation for use in Ford vehicles with inflatable seat belt systems.

Rear-Facing Only Infant Car Seats: Graco now allows the use of Ford vehicle lap shoulder inflatable seat belts with rear-facing only infant car seats when installed without the base. This includes all SnugRide® Click Connect™ models (without base), and all SnugRide® SnugLock®

models (without base). At this time, Graco still does NOT allow the use of inflatable vehicle belts for installation with rear-facing only infant car seats installed with a base. Graco strongly encourages consumers to utilize the LATCH system for rear-facing only infant car seats installed with a base.

Convertible Car Seats: Convertible car seats are approved, but when installing do NOT use the shoulder belt lock-off with inflatable belt systems. This includes all models of the Contender™ 65, Ready Ride™, ComfortSport™, My Ride™ 65, Fit4Me™ 65, Size4Me™ 65, MySize™ 65, Headwise™ 65, Sequel™ 65, Sequence™ 65, and Extend2Fit® Convertible Car Seats.

All-in-One Car Seats: All-in-One car seats are approved, but when installing do NOT use the shoulder belt lock-off with inflatable belt systems. This includes all models of the following both as a harness seat and a belt-positioning booster seat, TrioGrow™ SnugLock®, Extend2Fit® 3-in-1, Milestone™, 4Ever®, and Smart Seat™.

Harness Boosters: All models of Graco booster seats may continue to be used with Ford inflatable seat belts. This includes all models of the following Tranzitions®, Wayz®, Atlas™, Nautilus®.

Belt-Positioning Boosters: All models of Graco booster seats may continue to be used with Ford inflatable seat belts. This includes all models of the following TurboBooster® and Affix™."

When should I transition my child from a harness to the seat belt?

When forward-facing, children should use the built-in harness system for as long as possible until they reach the maximum forward-facing weight or height for their car seat. At that point, children should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. A booster is no longer needed once the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they reach 4 feet 9 inches tall and are between ages 8-12. Be sure to check your local and state laws, as well as AAP and NHTSA recommendations, for car seat usage.*

Do I need to replace my car seat after an accident?

Graco recommends replacing the car seat in the event of any type of accident. Even if there appears to be no damage to the car seat on the surface, the impact and force of a collision can cause unseen internal structural damage to your car seat. Any such damage may prohibit your car seat from properly protecting your child in the event of a sudden stop or crash.

[*FAQs on Accident Replacement Policy*](#)

Q: Why do you recommend replacing a car seat after any type of accident?

A: Sometimes there can be internal damage to the car seat that is not externally visibly. This internal damage could affect the safety performance of the car seat, so we err on the side of caution to protect our consumers. That is why we recommend consumers replace their car seats after an accident.

Q: How do I know my car seat is safe when it is shipped? What is the difference between that and a minor accident?

A: For car seat packaging and shipment, we conduct a simulated test on a sample of car seats in a controlled environment that includes dropping and squeezing the packaged car seat to ensure our products are packaged to provide product protection. This testing ensures that our car seats function as designed after shipment.

Q: Do I need to replace the car seat if my child was NOT in the car seat at the time of the accident?

A: Yes. During an accident, the car seat may experience crash energy that damages the seat, externally or internally, even if the seat was unoccupied.

Q: I don't see any damage to my car seat [after an accident]. Do I still need to replace it?

A: Yes. The car seat may have experienced internal damage that you cannot see. The damage could reduce the car seat's safety performance and effectiveness in the future which is why we recommend replacing the car seat.

Q: What type of damage may occur during an accident that I would not visibly see?

A: We do not know the specifics of your particular accident, but any of the following may have happened to the car seat during the accident that could affect the safety performance and effectiveness of the car seat:

- Side impact foam that lines the shell of the car seat may be cracked or dented
- Hairline cracks in the plastic that cannot be seen
- If a child is in the car seat during the crash, the harness may have stretched.
- Internal fractures to the car seat shell that cannot be seen
- Tether strap is stretched if it is attached to the car seat at the time of the crash
- Damage to the internal components of the buckle

Any of these situations could cause the car seat to fail if it were to be involved in a future crash, which is why Graco recommends car seat replacement after any type of accident.

Q: Do I still need to replace my car seat if my car was bumped in a parking lot, I slammed my car door into another car, or other similar minor bumps to the car?

A: Minor bumps to the car may not require car seat replacement. However, if there is any question that the seat may have been damaged, externally or internally, Graco recommends car seat replacement. Graco errs on the side of caution as any type of accident may impact the future effectiveness of the car seat.

Q: Why do some car seat manufacturer not recommend car seat replacement after a minor accident?

A: Some car seat manufacturers do not recommend purchasing a new car seat if the accident was minor because they follow the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommendation that you only need to replace a car seat after a moderate or severe crash. Graco has a different policy as safety is our priority and we err on the side of caution to ensure we do everything possible to keep your little ones safe.

Q: Why does Graco have a different position than NHTSA on car seat replacement after an accident?

A: You can learn more about NHTSA's position on their website at <https://saferide4kids.com/blog/restraints-after-crash/>. NHTSA provides their rationale and criteria for determining car seat replacement. Graco has a more stringent policy than NHTSA, along with many other car seat manufacturers, because you cannot see the damage that may happen internally in an accident.

Q: Will my insurance company pay for my seat replacement after an accident?

A: Maybe, but it depends on your specific policy and agreement with your insurance company. The insurance company may request documentation including a copy of the car seat manual or a letter from the car seat manufacturer stating that the car seat must be replaced. Please reach out to your insurance company to understand what documentation they require and Graco will be here to support you in gathering this information.

Q: My insurer denied my request to reimburse me for a replacement seat. Do I still need to replace my seat and what are my options now?

A: Yes. Graco recommends replacing the car seat in the event of any type of accident. We are here to help. Please follow these steps:

1. Provide insurance company a copy of the car seat manual that states our policy on car seat replacement after an accident
2. Contact Graco Consumer Service (1-800-345-4109) who can help provide a letter stating our policy that can then be given to your insurance company.

Can my Graco® car seat touch the back of the front vehicle seat in rear-facing mode?

For Graco® Car Seats, it is OK for the back of the car seat and/or head support to touch the back of the vehicle seat when installed rear-facing seat *as long as it is OK with the vehicle manufacturer* and provided it meets the following criteria:

1. The contact does not interfere with the proper installation of the car seat per the instruction manual. The contact must not affect the car seat angle or the tightness of the car seat installation. For car seats with an adjustable headrest, the headrest location should be determined per the manual and position the harness at or below the child's shoulders.
2. There is no interference that would create pressure or force on the car seat from the back of the front vehicle seat that would cause the car seat to move or change recline angle.

Does Graco allow the use of BOTH the vehicle safety belt and the lower anchors?

For harnessed car seats, Graco does NOT allow the use of BOTH the vehicle safety belt and the lower anchors.

Without a harness, as a belt positioning booster, Graco allows the securing of the car seat with the LATCH system, only if the vehicle manufacture allows it. The child still **MUST BE SECURED** with the vehicle lap/shoulder seat belt. You should always verify the following before using LATCH in the booster mode: The LATCH hook **DOES NOT** interfere with any vehicle seat belts or buckles. If the LATCH interferes with the vehicle seat belts or if the chosen seating position does not have LATCH bars, you **MUST** store the LATCH strap. Always secure car seat with LATCH or a vehicle seat belt, even when unoccupied. In a crash, an unsecured car seat can injure passengers.

How do I change the position of the harness straps?

The correct harness position should be:

- Rear facing – at or slightly below the child’s shoulders
- Forward facing – at or slightly above the child’s shoulders

Check your car seat manual for instructions specific to your car seat model.

If your car seat features the Simply Safe Adjust™ Harness System, the car seat headrest and harness adjust together with one hand. Raise or lower the headrest to the correct height for your child.

For car seats without the Simply Safe Adjust™ Harness System, to change the height of your harness straps manually, follow the following steps:

1. Loosen harness straps: Lift lever and pull shoulder straps out.
2. Remove both shoulder harness strap loops from splitter plate on back of child restraint. Pull harness straps through restraint and pad.
3. Insert harness straps into desired slots. Make sure harness straps are threaded through matching slot of seat pad and child restraint. It may be necessary to remove seat pad from top of child restraint while relocating slots.
4. Insert harness straps behind harness cover plate.
CHECK that the loops are completely within the splitter plate.
Make sure both harness straps are set to the same harness slot level.
5. Attach harness straps to splitter plate.

What are the instructions for tightening the harness straps?

Tighten the harness by pulling the harness adjustment strap. When you are not able to pinch any of the harness webbing at your child’s shoulder, the harness is tight enough. A snug harness should not allow any slack. It lies in a relatively straight line without sagging. It does not press on the child’s chest or push the child’s body into an unnatural position.

There are some troubleshooting tips that we would like to advise to help alleviate issues with

your harness adjustment strap. Please follow these steps (as listed below) to alleviate the issues that you are having with your harness. Start these steps with the harness system loose

- Raise the headrest to the highest possible setting and lower it to the appropriate height for the child. Harness straps for a rear facing restraint should be just at or directly below the child's shoulders. Harness straps for a forward facing restraint should be just at or directly above the child's shoulders. (Lower the headrest slowly to ensure that the harness does not bunch behind the headrest in the process)
- Connect/Lock the crotch buckle and chest clip.
- Push the chest clip down to the crotch buckle
- Push the harness covers (if applicable) down to the chest clip
- Pull up on the harness above the chest clip or harness covers (if applicable) this allows the slack in the thigh area to move out.
- Push the chest clip back down if needed.
- Pull the adjustment strap in the front to tighten the harnesses on the child (pull the strap straight forward. Pulling the strap up, down or to the sides could cause the strap to fray)
- Move the harness covers (if applicable) to the shoulder level against the harness slot
- Move the chest clip to armpit level
- Tighten any slack if needed.

Taking these steps before pulling the adjustment strap to tighten the harness should alleviate issues. However, If these tips still do not work for you, please contact Graco Consumer Services at 1-800-345-4109, Monday-Friday from 8AM-5PM (EST) and request to speak with one of our Child Passenger Safety Technicians for further assistance.