

The Queensland Government is introducing a package of new and amended road rules – including new seatbelt and child restraint legislation. The new and amended road rules strengthen existing legislation with the aim of improving road safety in Queensland.

Road Rules

Changes are being made to the Queensland Road Rules to ensure national consistency and alignment with the Australian Road Rules. The new road rules strengthen the current Queensland Road Rules and will come into effect from 12 October 2009.

In the majority of cases, changes to the Queensland Road Rules will provide motorists with further clarity on the existing road rules.

There is an extensive package being introduced. The list of all changes is available at www.transport.qld.gov.au/roadrules

Key changes include:

- **Fog lights** – turn off in clear weather. Drive with fog lights on in clear weather, day or night, and you risk being fined \$40.
- **Single centre line** – don't U-turn. Do a U-turn over a single continuous centre line and you risk being fined \$180 and 3 demerit points.
- **Seatbelts** – all passengers must wear them. Drive with a passenger of any age without a seatbelt or child restraint and you risk being fined \$300 and 3 demerit points
- **Wheeled recreational devices (WRDs)** - People riding a wheeled recreational device, such as a skateboard, on the road at night will now be fined \$40. Riders can still ride WRDs at night on a path (for example, a footpath or shared path).

A statewide public education campaign will commence in the coming weeks to ensure high levels of awareness of the new and amended road rules.

Queensland motorists are encouraged to visit the Department of Transport and Main Roads website (www.transport.qld.gov.au/roadrules) for a comprehensive list of the road rule amendments and more information relating to the changes.

Child restraints

One of the major changes is related to child restraints legislation. New child restraint laws will be introduced in an effort to improve children's safety and ensure parents and carers correctly secure their most precious cargo.

From 11 March 2010, all children up to seven years of age must be secured in a child restraint. A child may stop using a child restraint once they turn seven or if their eye level is above the back of the booster seat.

Seatbelts, including child restraints, improve your chances of surviving a serious crash by up to 50%. Babies, infants and children are fragile and need protecting when travelling in a vehicle. Children completely rely on their mother, father or carer to keep them safe. They can't buckle up themselves.

Drivers can be fined \$300 and 3 demerit points for travelling with an unrestrained or incorrectly restrained child in the vehicle. Drivers should also note they could receive an additional penalty for each unrestrained or incorrectly restrained child.

The new child restraint laws have been introduced to protect children. By providing greater clarity to parents it is hoped the number of children being prematurely graduated to the next level of child restraint, or to no child restraint at all, will be reduced.

A child restraint can be a capsule, child car seat, or booster seat that secures and restrains a newborn baby, infant, or child while travelling in a vehicle. The child restraint must comply with Australian Safety Standard AS1754 or AS/NZS1754.

The department has further information and a guide to help parents select a suitable restraint for their child. These are available on the department's website www.transport.qld.gov.au/childrestraints

A statewide public education campaign will be implemented to ensure parents and carers are aware of the legislation changes, prior to laws coming into effect in March 2010.

All parents and carers should also ensure their child restraint is properly installed and regularly check them with RACQ, the Queensland Ambulance Service or Kidsafe Queensland.

For advice, please contact:

RACQ

- Contact your local RACQ branch
- Visit www.racq.com
- Email childrestraints@racq.com.au
- Or phone 1800 816 523

Queensland Ambulance Service

- Visit www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/babycapsule
- Phone 1300 369 003

Kidsafe Qld

- Visit www.kidsafeqld.com.au
- Email qld@kidsafe.org.au
- Phone + 61 7 3854 1829

The following table is a guide for parents and carers to selecting a suitable child restraint.

Age	Indicative Weight	Child Restraint
0 to 6 months	less than 8 kgs	rearward facing baby capsule or infant restraint
6 months to 1 year	8 to 12 kgs	rearward or forward facing infant restraint
6 months to 4 years	8 to 18 kgs	forward facing child restraint with built-in harness
4 years to 7 years	14 to 26 kgs	booster seat with H-harness or a booster seat with a secured adult seatbelt