

# Child Occupant Protection Glossary



## #

**3-in-1 Car Seat:** Refer to *All-in-One Car Seat*.

**4-in-1 Car Seat:** Refer to *All-in-One Car Seat*.

**5-in-1 Car Seat:** Refer to *All-in-One Car Seat*.

## A

**AAP:** American Academy of Pediatrics ([aap.org](http://aap.org))

**Adjustable Foot:** Refer to *Recline Adjustment*.

**Advanced Air Bag:** Air bag that uses a complex system of sensors and other technology to automatically adjust deployment in a crash, based on the front seat occupant; also referred to as smart air bag system

**After-Market Product:** Refer to *Non-Approved Product*.

**Air Bag:** Vehicle safety device made up of a flexible fabric envelope designed to rapidly deploy (inflate) when the vehicle determines that there has been a crash; designed to be used with a vehicle seat belt; vehicle manufacturers use many terms to refer to air bags including SRS—supplemental restraint system, SIR—supplemental inflatable restraint, SIPS—side impact protection system, SAB—side air bag, SABIC—side air bag inflatable curtain, and IC—inflatable curtain

**All-in-One Car Seat:** Car seat that can be used rear-facing, forward-facing and as a booster; may be referred to as 3-in-1, 4-in-1 or 5-in-1 car seat

**ALR:** Refer to *Automatic Locking Retractor*.

**Anchor, Seat Belt:** Metal component that attaches the seat belt to the vehicle structure

**Angle Adjustment:** Refer to *Recline Adjustment*.

**Anti-Rebound Bar:** Rigid bar found on some rear-facing car seats used to reduce the movement of the car seat towards the rear of the vehicle (rebound) in the event of a crash

**Automatic Locking Retractor:** Retractor on a seat belt that locks maintaining a fixed length of seat belt webbing; often referred to as ALR

## B

**Backless Booster Seat:** Booster seat that uses the vehicle's seat back or head restraint for head, neck and back support for the child; may be referred to as low-back booster seat or no-back booster seat

**Belt Path:** Manufacturer-designated area on a car seat or booster seat where the seat belt or lower anchor connector webbing is routed to secure in the vehicle

**Belt-Positioning Booster Seat:** Refer to *Booster Seat*.

**Belt Tensioner:** Device found on car seats that aids installation by removing slack in the seat belt; also referred to as belt tensioning plate and tension doors

**Best Practice:** Safest way to transport a child based on the child's age, weight, height and developmental level; gold standard of protection, while following manufacturer instructions

**Booster Seat:** Seat that raises and positions the child so vehicle seat belts fits properly over the stronger points of a child's body, the hips and across the chest; must be used with lap-and-shoulder belt; may be high back or backless; also referred to as belt-positioning booster seat, BPB, no-back booster seat and low-back booster seat

**BPB:** Refer to *Booster Seat*.

**Buckle:** Locking mechanism of the vehicle seat belt or car seat harness; the latch plate fits into the buckle

**Buckle Strap:** Webbing strap with a buckle on one end found on car seats between the child's legs; may be adjustable; also referred to as crotch strap

**Built-In Car Seat/Booster Seat:** *Refer to Integrated Car Seat/Booster Seat.*



**Car Safety Seat:** *Refer to Car Seat.*

**Car Seat:** Crash-tested device specially designed to provide protection for an infant or child in the event of a motor vehicle crash; general term for rear-facing only, convertible, forward-facing only, and all-in-one car seats; may be referred to as child seat, child safety seat, car safety seat, child restraint or child restraint system

**Caregiver:** Person responsible for a child's well-being and safety

**Carrier:** Part of a rear-facing only car seat that connects to a detachable base; depending on the model may be used without the detachable base

**Carrier Release:** Mechanism that releases the carrier from the detachable base on a rear-facing only car seat; may be found on the carrier or the detachable base

**Carry Handle:** Plastic bar attached to rear-facing only seats used to carry the car seat; depending on the model, also may be used as an anti-rebound bar

**Carry Handle Release Button:** Mechanism that releases the carry handle on a rear-facing only car seat so it can be adjusted to different positions for carry and travel depending on the model

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov/injury](https://www.cdc.gov/injury) and [cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety))

**Chest Clip:** *Refer to Retainer Clip.*

**Child Passenger Safety Technician:** Person who has successfully completed the standardized National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training course; also referred to as CPST, CPS Technician and Technician

**Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor:** Person who has successfully completed the requirements to teach the National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training course; also referred to as CPSTI, CPS Instructor or Instructor

**Child Restraint/Child Restraint System:** Crash-tested device or system that is specially designed to provide protection for an infant or a child in the event of a motor vehicle crash; general term for systems including car seats, booster seats, vests or car beds that meet FMVSS 213; referred to as CR or CRS

**Child Seat/Child Safety Seat:** *Refer to Car Seat.*

**Combination Car Seat:** Forward-facing only car seat that can be used with the harness forward-facing then with removal of the harness as a booster seat

**Compartmentalization:** Combination of energy-absorbent seat backs and narrow spacing on school buses that creates a compartment within which each occupant is confined in a front crash

**Compliance Tests:** Crash tests done on car seats and booster seats to confirm that manufacturers meet FMVSS 213 requirements; may be conducted by manufacturers, NHTSA or others

**Convertible Car Seat:** Car seat that can be used both rear-facing and forward-facing

**CPS:** Child Passenger Safety

**CPS Instructor:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor.*

**CPS Technician:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician.*

**CPST:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician.*

**CPSTI:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor.*

**CR/CRS:** Refer to Child Restraint/Child Restraint System.

**Crash:** Refer to Vehicle Crash.

**Crash-Locking Latch Plate:** Refer to Dynamic Latch Plate.

**Crotch Strap:** Refer to Buckle Strap.

## D

**Dead Zone:** 12- to 18-inch space where an automatic locking retractor does not lock; may mislead into thinking the retractor does not have lockability

**Deceleration:** Act of slowing down; relates to both objects and people; a rapid deceleration can contribute to injury

**Deploy:** Inflate as in air bags

**Design Standard:** Regulation that mandates how the product should look, promoting continuity between manufacturers

**Detachable Base:** Separate car seat base that can be installed in the vehicle; typically found on rear-facing only car seats

**Direct Routing Tether System:** Tether system where the tether strap routes directly to a tether anchor without the use of a tether router

**Dynamic Latch Plate:** Non-locking latch plate found in newer vehicles; does not hold webbing at a fixed length; also referred to as crash-locking latch plate

**Ease-of-Use Ratings:** Set of ratings developed by NHTSA to evaluate how easy certain car seat features are to use based on the following categories: instructions, vehicle installation features, labels, and securing the child

## E

**ELR:** Refer to Emergency Locking Retractor.

**Emergency Locking Retractor:** Retractor on a seat belt that locks in response to a sudden stop, acceleration, turn or crash; often referred to as ELR

**Expiration Date:** Date when a car seat or booster seat may no longer be used according to manufacturer directions; length of use varies by manufacturer and some manufacturers do not list an expiration date; if applicable, date may be found stamped in the shell, on a label or in the instruction manual

## F

**FAA Approval:** Certification that the car seat meets the FMVSS 213 compliance test required for use on aircraft; noted on the car seat label as "This Restraint is Certified for Use in Motor Vehicles and Aircraft."

**Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards:** Regulations that define minimum safety performance requirements for motor vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment; often referred to as FMVSS

**FMVSS:** Refer to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

**FMVSS 208:** Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that regulates seat belts and frontal air bags

**FMVSS 213:** Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that pertains to all child restraint systems intended for use as crash protection in vehicles for children up to 80 pounds

**FMVSS 225:** Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that sets the design and performance standards of the LATCH in vehicles

**Foam:** Material added by the manufacturer between the plastic shell and fabric cover of a car seat or booster seat; rigid foam typically is used for added crash protection; softer foam typically is used for added comfort

**Foot Prop:** Support mechanism that extends from the base of a car seat to the vehicle floor; used to prevent or reduce excessive forward and downward rotation of the seat in a crash; also referred to as load leg

**Footwell:** Space for feet in front of vehicle seat

**Forward-Facing:** Car seat that is used facing the front of the vehicle

**Forward-Facing Only Car Seat:** Car seat designed for use by an older child in the forward-facing position only; does not have a rear-facing or booster seat mode

**Frame:** *Refer to Shell.*

**Frontal Air Bag:** Air bag that deploys from the dashboard or steering wheel; includes driver and passenger air bags

**Frontal Crash:** Crash at the front end of the vehicle; the most frequent type of crash

## G

**GHSA:** Governors Highway Safety Association ([ghsa.org](http://ghsa.org))

**Glove Box:** Compartment built into the dashboard of a vehicle over the front seat passenger's footwell; used for miscellaneous storage; also referred to as glove compartment

**Glove Compartment:** *Refer to Glove Box.*

**Good, Better, Best:** Philosophy that guides Child Passenger Safety Technicians in understanding and respecting caregiver choices

## H

**Harness, 5-pt:** Webbing straps that keep a child in the car seat and spread crash forces with five points of contact (one over each shoulder, one on each side of the pelvis, and one between the legs) with all five coming together at the buckle

**Harness Adjuster:** *Refer to Harness Adjuster Strap.*

**Harness Adjuster Strap:** Single piece of webbing used to tighten the harness on a car seat; also referred to as harness adjuster

**Harness Release Button:** Mechanism that releases the harness to allow the straps to be loosened on a car seat

**Harness Retainer Clip:** *Refer to Retainer Clip.*

**Harness Slot:** Place in a car seat where the harness is threaded through the shell

**Head Rest:** *Refer to Head Restraint.*

**Head Restraint:** Part of a vehicle seat that provides protection to the head and neck of a passenger, particularly in a rear-end crash; may be adjustable; also referred to as head rest

**High Back Booster Seat:** Booster seat with a shell that provides head, neck and back support for the child

**Human Crash:** Second stage of a vehicle crash when the occupants collide with parts of the vehicle interior, air bag and/or restraint webbing, if restrained

## I

**IIHS:** Insurance Institute for Highway Safety ([iihs.org](http://iihs.org))

**Indirect Routing Tether System:** Tether system where the tether strap first goes through a router that is directly behind the vehicle seat and then attaches to a tether anchor that is located elsewhere, often behind an adjacent vehicle seat; may be found in pickup trucks

**Infant Car Seat:** *Refer to Rear-Facing Only Car Seat.*

**Inflatable Seat Belt:** Seat belt with an air bag in the shoulder belt portion; found in rear seats of some newer vehicles

**Insert:** Additional accessory for car seats and booster seats provided by the manufacturer to aid positioning, fit and comfort; also referred to as pad

**Inspection Station:** Dedicated location staffed by Child Passenger Safety Technicians who are certified to teach parents and caregivers how to use their car seats

**Instruction Manual Storage Location:** Designated space, required by FMVSS 213, on car seats and booster seats to store the instruction manual

**Instructor:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor.*

**Integrated Car Seat/Booster Seat:** Car seat or booster seat built into the vehicle seat; also referred to as built-in car seat/booster seat

**Internal Crash:** Third stage of a vehicle crash; occurs after an occupant's body comes to a complete stop and the internal organs continue to move toward the point of impact

## K

**Knee Air Bag:** Air bag that works in tandem with the other frontal air bags to control the position of the occupant and absorb energy in a crash; also reduces the risk for injuries to the knee, thigh and hip; located under the steering wheel or glove box

## L

**Labels:** General use information, as required by FMVSS 213, affixed to the car seat or booster seat

**Lap Belt:** Seat belt anchored at two points for use across a vehicle occupant's thighs/hips; does not provide upper body protection

**Lap-and-Shoulder Belt:** Seat belt that is anchored at three points restraining the vehicle occupant at the hips and across the chest and shoulder; provides upper body protection

**LATCH:** Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children; vehicle attachment system dedicated to car seats

**Latch Plate:** Part of the buckle mechanism that connects the vehicle seat belt or car seat harness into the buckle

**Lateral Crash:** *Refer to Side Impact Crash.*

**Learn, Practice, Explain:** Guiding philosophy behind the National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training promoting learning the facts/skills/information, practicing the facts/skills/information and explaining what you have learned to caregivers

**Level Indicator:** *Refer to Recline Indicator.*

**Load Leg:** *Refer to Foot Prop.*

**Lock-Off:** Built-in seat belt locking feature found on the shell of the car seat or the detachable base

**Lockability Requirement:** Requirement that all vehicles since model year 1996 have a locking feature in every passenger seat belt that can be used to install a car seat

**Locking Clip:** Metal piece that secures the seat belt at a fixed length in place of a locking latch plate that does not lock; used with car seat installation

**Locking Latch Plate:** Latch plate that holds the lap belt at a fixed length, after it has been adjusted

**Low-Back Booster Seat:** *Refer to Backless Booster Seat.*

**Lower Anchors:** Standardized pair of metal bars located near the vehicle seat bight used in conjunction with lower anchor connectors on a car seat

**Lower Anchor Connector:** Metal component used to secure the car seat or booster seat to lower anchors in the vehicle

## M, N

**Motor Vehicle Crash:** *Refer to Vehicle Crash.*

**National Child Passenger Safety Board:** Group that maintains the quality and integrity of the national Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training curriculum; activities are managed by the National Safety Council ([cpsboard.org](https://www.cpsboard.org) and [nsc.org](https://www.nsc.org)); also referred to as NCPBSB

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:**

Federal agency that is part of the Department of Transportation which promotes highway and transportation safety; developed original Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training curriculum and remains committed to providing regular updates to the curriculum; also referred to as NHTSA ([nhtsa.gov](http://nhtsa.gov))

**NCPSB:** *Refer to the National Child Passenger Safety Board.*

**NHTSA:** *Refer to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

**No-Back Booster Seat:** *Refer to Backless Booster Seat.*

**Non-Approved Product:** Product typically made and marketed by a third party that is not approved for use in a car seat by the car seat or vehicle manufacturer; commonly referred to as after-market product or non-regulated product

**Non-Locking Latch Plate:** Latch plate that does not have a locking feature to hold the webbing at a fixed length; includes sliding, dynamic and sewn-on vehicle latch plates

**Non-Regulated Product:** *Refer to Non-Approved Product.*

**P**

**Pad:** *Refer to Insert.*

**Passenger Air Bag:** Air bag that is in the right front part of the passenger compartment; typically it is larger than the driver air bag and may restrain either center or right front passengers occupants or both

**Performance Standard:** Regulation that mandates how a product should perform in a crash but does not mandate how a product should be designed or look in order to meet the standard

**R**

**Rear-End Crash:** Crash at the rear end of the vehicle; usually less severe than a frontal crash

**Rear-Facing:** Car seat that is used facing the rear of the vehicle; provides better head and neck protection, especially for infants and toddlers

**Rear-Facing Only Car Seat:** Car seat designed for use only by a young child in a semi-reclined rear-facing position; typically has a carrier and a detachable base; not permitted by manufacturer to be used forward-facing; also referred to as infant car seat

**Rebound:** Motion in the opposite direction after initial impact has occurred

**Recalls:** Voluntary or required actions taken by car seat and vehicle manufacturers to correct problems or deficiencies once products have been distributed or sold

**Recline Adjuster:** Mechanism that moves the recline adjustment

**Recline Adjustment:** Part of the car seat that moves to change the recline angle; can be found on both rear-facing and forward-facing car seats; may be referred to as adjustable foot and angle adjustment

**Recline Indicator:** Mechanism that identifies correct angle for use per manufacturer's instructions; also referred to as level indicator

**Registration Card:** Postage-paid return card, required by FMVSS 213, that comes with every new car seat; should be returned to the manufacturer so owners can be notified of safety issues, including recalls

**Restraining Force:** Equals weight of the occupant multiplied by the vehicle speed (approximately)

**Retainer Clip:** Plastic part that holds the harness shoulder straps on car seats together over the child's chest at armpit level; also referred to as chest clip and harness retainer clip



**Retractor:** Mechanism that gathers and stores extra seat belt webbing

**Retrofit:** Installing, fitting, or adapting a device or system not included in the original product; manufacturer's instructions must be followed; examples of this would be to add seat belts on a school bus or add a tether anchor in a passenger vehicle

**Ride Down:** Increasing the stopping time to reduce the crash forces on the body during a vehicle crash

**Rollover Crash:** Crash where the vehicle rolls over onto its side or upside down one or more times

**Rotation:** Crash where the vehicle spins

**Router:** Mechanism that guides the tether in pickup trucks when using the indirect routing tether system; may be closed loop or open system

## S

**Safe Kids Worldwide:** Certifying body responsible for administering all aspects of the Child Passenger Safety Technician certification program ([cert.safekids.org](http://cert.safekids.org) and [safekids.org](http://safekids.org))

**Safety Belt:** *Refer to Seat Belt.*

**Seat Belt:** Buckle, retractor, anchor, webbing and latch plate system that restrains the occupant in the vehicle; also referred to as a seat belt system, safety belt, lap belt and lap-and-shoulder belt

**Seat Belt Positioner:** Non-approved device that is manufactured to alter the positioning of a lap and/or shoulder belt on a child

**Seat Belt Syndrome:** Injuries as a result of using only a lap belt or the lap portion of a lap-and-shoulder belt in a crash; typically include severe abdominal injuries and/or fractures of the lumbar (lower) spine

**Seat Belt System:** *Refer to Seat Belt.*

**Seat Bight:** Area where the vehicle seat cushion meets the vehicle seat back; also referred to as vehicle seat bight

**Seat Cushion Air Bag:** Air bag designed to raise the front portion of a seat cushion to help keep the occupant in the correct position during a frontal crash; typically found under the driver's and/or front passenger's seat

**Seat Padding:** Fabric that covers the shell/frame and foam, if present, of car seats and booster seats

**Sewn-On Latch Plate:** Non-locking latch plate; permanently stitched in place on the webbing

**Shell:** Molded plastic and/or metal structure of the car seat or booster seat; also referred to as frame

**Shoulder Belt Guide/Positioner:** Mechanism in a vehicle or on a booster seat where the vehicle shoulder belt is routed to help position the belt across the shoulder rather than across the neck; may be adjustable

**Side Air Bag:** Air bag that is designed to fill the space between the occupant and the door and/or window; may deploy in frontal, side impact, and rollover crashes; may be referred to as side impact air bag

**Side Impact Air Bag:** *Refer to Side Air Bag.*

**Side Impact Crash:** Crash into the side of a vehicle; usually the most severe/deadly type of crash; also referred to as lateral crash

**Sliding Latch Plate:** Non-locking latch plate; the seat belt webbing moves freely through the latch plate and does not lock at a fixed length

**Smart Air Bag System:** *Refer to Advanced Air Bag.*

**Snug Harness:** Harness straps that do not allow slack; the strap lies in a relatively straight line without sagging yet does not press into the child's shoulder creating an indentation

**Splitter Plate:** Metal component that connects the two ends of the shoulder harness to the harness adjuster strap on a car seat

**Switchable Retractor:** Retractor on a seat belt that usually functions as an emergency locking retractor and can be switched to function as an automatic locking retractor to secure a car seat

**T**

**Technician:** *Refer to Child Passenger Safety Technician.*

**Tether:** Piece of adjustable webbing (single or dual strap) with a tether connector on one end attached to the top of a car seat; attaches to a tether anchor in the vehicle on the other end to limit forward motion in a crash

**Tether Anchor:** Hardware in the vehicle that provides an approved location to attach a tether on a car seat

**Tether Connector:** Component attached to the end of the tether webbing used to secure the car seat to the tether anchor in the vehicle

**V**

**Vault:** Crash where the vehicle flips end over end

**Vehicle Crash:** First stage of a vehicle crash when the vehicle strikes another vehicle or object; also referred to as crash and motor vehicle crash

**Vehicle Seat Bight:** *Refer to Seat Bight.*

**Vest:** Harness system used in place of a car seat or booster seat either with the vehicle seat belt system or LATCH

**W**

**Webbing:** Fabric part of the vehicle seat belt or car seat harness

**Whiplash:** Injury to the neck usually caused by sudden whipping of the head backward during a rear impact collision