

## **VIRGINIA STATE LAW**

Effective July 1, 1997

- Children under 4 years of age must be restrained in a child safety seat which meets federal standards.
- All children between 4 and 16 years of age must wear a safety belt no matter where they are seated in the vehicle.
- The driver is responsible for all children in the vehicle.
- Police officers can stop a vehicle for not having children properly restrained.
- The law applies to persons who drive in Virginia and vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1968 that are driven in Virginia.

*According to 1996 figures, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles reports that in the state of Virginia...*

- A traffic crash occurs every 4.15 minutes.
- 225 Virginians are injured every day in traffic crashes.
- 148 lives were saved and 16,330 injuries were prevented by safety belt use in 1996.

**For further information, please contact:**

Center for the Advancement of Public Health  
George Mason University  
MS 1F5  
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444  
(703) 993-3697 FAX (703) 993-3763

- Check out our safety web site at:  
[www.safety.gmu.edu](http://www.safety.gmu.edu)

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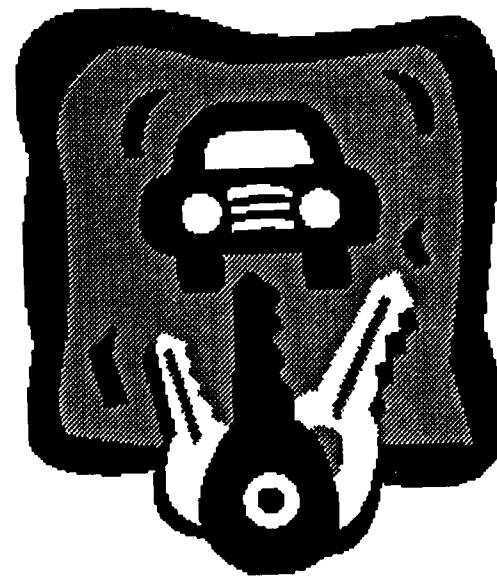
**For local information, please contact:**  
Your local Police Department  
or Sheriff's Office

*Northern Virginia:*  
Bob Weakley  
Community Traffic Safety Programs  
6308 Grovedale Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22310  
(703) 313-9443

*Shenandoah Valley:*  
Doug Stader  
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Funded by a grant from  
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

**When it comes to  
passenger safety...**



**LOCATION  
IS  
THE KEY**

*Location is the Key* to decreasing risk of injury during a motor vehicle crash. The location of the driver and passengers, the location of the child safety seat, and the location of the safety belt are all important factors in protecting motor vehicle occupants. **"Location is the Key"** is designed to provide helpful information for citizens to protect themselves in a motor vehicle crash.

**"Location is the Key"** focuses on three areas of passenger safety:



Location of the motor vehicle occupants



Location of the safety belt



Location of the child safety seat

### 1996 Facts and Figures

- An average of 115 persons died each day in motor vehicle crashes – one every 13 minutes.
- An average of 8 children (0 to 14 years of age) were killed and 980 injured *every day* in motor vehicle crashes.
- Of the 653 child occupant fatalities in 1996, 52% were totally unrestrained.

Information in this brochure, unless otherwise noted, was provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1998.

## LOCATION OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANTS

- The rear seat is the safest place for children of all ages.
- All back seat passengers should wear safety belts.

"In a 55 mile per hour crash, an unbelted back seat passenger of average size would fly forward with a force of 3,000 pounds — enough to seriously injure or even kill other passengers."

- Janet Dewey, Executive Director of the Air Bag Safety Campaign, 1997.

## LOCATION OF THE SAFETY BELT

- The lap belt should be worn below the abdomen. Sitting upright against the seat back keeps the lap belt below hip bones.
- The shoulder belt should come over the collar bone away from the neck and cross over the breast bone.
- For child safety seats, harnesses should be snug against the child with the harness retainer clip at armpit level.
- For children in safety seats in cold weather, put the harness on the child first *before* putting on any blankets or

## LOCATION OF THE CHILD SAFETY SEAT

- Child safety seats should never be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag.
- From birth until 1 year of age, infants should be in a rear-facing infant or convertible child safety seat.
- Children 1 to 4 years of age should be in a forward-facing convertible child safety seat.
- Children 4 to 8 years of age should be in booster seats with a safety belt.

## CHILD SAFETY SEAT TIPS

1. Send in the registration card that comes with your new seat. It will make it easier to be advised of a recall.
2. Infant seats that double as carriers should have the handle back during transport. If the handle is left in the carrying position, it will interfere with the designed motion of the seat in a crash.

Call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Auto Safety Hotline (1-800-424-9393) to see if any recalls or notices have been issued on your child safety seat.