

Guidance for Drivers regarding seat belts



The law relating to the use of seatbelts differs slightly in connection with Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles.

These guidelines refer to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles only and are not intended to give advice to drivers/owners of any other type of vehicle.

Driver seat belt requirements

Private Hire Drivers

A driver's seat belt must be worn when not carrying passengers. Whilst carrying passengers it is recommended that the driver wears a seatbelt but it is not a legal requirement to do so.

Hackney Carriage Drivers

When a driver is "plying for hire" i.e. actively seeking customers by being hailed on the street, waiting at a taxi rank, or transporting passengers, there is no legal requirement to wear a seatbelt. While it is advisable for the driver to always wear a seatbelt, it is not legally required in these circumstances. However, if the driver leaves the boundaries of their licensed area and is not carrying passengers, they are legally required to wear a seatbelt.

Passenger seat belt requirements and responsibilities

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under the age of 14 years are restrained correctly in accordance with the law, (see below)

Children up to 3 years

If a child restraint* is not available then the child may travel unrestrained in the rear.

Children aged 3 and above, until they reach either their 12th birthday OR 135cm in height

Children can only travel in the front seat if a child seat is fitted. They may be carried in the rear of the vehicle in either a child seat, if one is fitted, or the adult seat belt.

Children 12 or 13 years old OR over 135cm in height

Children can travel in either the front or rear seat using the adult seat belt.

**Child restraint is the generic term for a baby seat, child seat, booster seat or booster cushion.*

Legal Penalties

As a driver, if you are convicted of failing to ensure that a child passenger is using an appropriate child restraint or wearing a seat belt according to the legal requirements described above, you could face a fine of up to £500.

In addition to the legal penalties, failure to wear a seat belt or failure to ensure that a child passenger uses an appropriate child restraint or wears a seat belt according to the legal requirements described above, could affect any claims against your motor insurance cover.

You could also face civil proceedings for damages, if (for example) you failed to safely carry someone else's child.