Guidance on the Safety of Infants and Children on Board
NOTICE

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INTRODUCTION

IATA plays a key role in raising awareness of important cabin safety issues. Cabin safety is a component of an airline safety management system that includes proactive data collection and the ensuing prevention activities related to cabin design and operation, equipment, procedures, crew training, human performance, and passenger management. Cabin safety also comprises of all activities that cabin crew must accomplish in order to contribute to the safe and efficient operation of the aircraft during normal, abnormal and emergency situations.

These guidelines are the product of work carried out by the IATA Cabin Operations Safety Task Force (COSTF) which is comprised of safety experts from IATA member airlines. The COSTF is established to develop, promote and improve standards, procedures and best practices to ensure safety and security in all aspects of cabin operations. The representatives are experts in the domain of Cabin Safety, Cabin Crew Training, Incident and Accident Investigation, Human Factors and Quality Assurance. IATA wishes to thank the IATA Cabin Operations Safety Task Force for their dedication and hard work.

These guidelines are not intended to replace or contradict any current State regulations nor the IOSA Standards and Recommended Practices (ISARPs). Airlines should always comply with the regulations and requirements of their competent Authority. We welcome your feedback and contributions. Please forward your suggestions or comments to cabin_safety@iata.org. To view other guidance documents, visit: www.iata.org/cabin-safety.
1. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

IATA recognizes that the safest way to secure an infant or child on board an aircraft is in an approved child restraint system. It is for this reason that IATA recommends the use of an approved child restraint system (CRS) for travel and encourages airlines to promote their use on board. IATA has drafted the following guidelines to encourage and promote the use of a CRS on board aircraft when they are accepted by the State.

The current lack of harmonized State regulations specific to child restraints systems interferes with the seamless use of passenger provided CRS. As certain States do not accept foreign approved CRS, passengers are sometimes not permitted to use their CRS when travelling on a foreign airline. Although their CRS is approved in their State, they are instructed to lap hold their infant (with or without a supplemental loop belt, depending on the airline’s State regulatory requirement) or to place their child in a seat secured with a lap belt while their CRS is placed in the hold of the aircraft.

A harmonized solution that enables and safely promotes the use of CRS for travel on board aircraft globally is required. IATA recommends that an internationally recognized solution be sought on the issue of child restraints and is committed to working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to achieve this. The responsible identification of a solution should be based on a strong data foundation and supported by a well-documented safety risk analysis. The comprehensive solution should be applicable worldwide and be practical, affordable, operationally realistic, feasible and harmonized. However, this harmonized solution is a complex one that could take some time to achieve as the regulators assess their current regulatory requirements and harmonize their regulations.

As a first priority, IATA urges regulators to accept foreign approved child restraint systems so that airlines can accept the use of passenger-provided foreign approved CRS on board their aircraft. IATA cautions on any regulatory change at the individual State level that would mandate the use of a specific child restraint system as there is no international Standard addressing this at this time.

IATA has developed the Guidance on the Safety of Infants and Children on Board with the aim of further encouraging and promoting the use of approved CRS on board aircraft by creating heightened awareness on this important topic with both industry at large and members of the traveling public.
1.1 IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA)

The IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) Program is an internationally recognized and accepted evaluation system designed to assess the operational management and control systems of an Operator. The safety and security requirements published in the Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (ICAO Annexes) are the primary source for specifications contained in the ISARPs.

As outlined in the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) Standards Manual (ISM), provisions and guidelines that are applicable to the carriage of infants are drafted in order to promote a means to restrain an infant as applicable to the airline authority’s regulations. In the absence of a State regulation, the IOSA provisions require that an airline still develops procedures.\(^1\)

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CAB 3.4.5 If the Operator conducts passenger flights with or without cabin crew, the Operator shall have procedures to ensure the secure restraint of infants during the phases of flight and conditions specified in CAB 3.4.4. (GM)

**Guidance**

The term “infant” refers to small children as defined by the Authority. If the Authority does not have a definition, the operator would publish its own definition in the OM. An “infant” is typically defined as a child that is less than two years of age. Some regulatory authorities require the use of child restraint devices, for which there is no universally accepted definition. The term “restraint devices” refers to any device that is accepted by the Authority and is utilized specifically to keep small children restrained in the aircraft cabin. Automobile seats approved for use on an aircraft, “loop belts” and “infant seat belts” are examples of child restraint devices. Procedures would be in place to ensure infants are securely restrained. Such procedures typically include the use of infant restraint devices or could specify other means of restraint. If the Authority requires specific procedures (e.g. infants held by an adult who is occupying an approved seat or berth) or identifies an approved type of restraint device, the operator is required to be in compliance with those requirements.

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\(^1\) [www.iata.org/iosa](http://www.iata.org/iosa)
2. RECOMMENDATION OF USE OF CRS

The use of an approved child restraint system is the recommended means to secure an infant or child on board an aircraft. It also provides for the person responsible for the infant or child to have their CRS available for travel in an automobile upon arrival at their destination. For the purpose of this document, a responsible person may be a parent, guardian or caregiver.

2.1 Infant

An infant (is less than 2 years of age) should be restrained in an approved child restraint system which meets the product limitations (height and weight) as established by the CRS manufacturer.

If the responsible person does not provide an approved infant restraint system, or if the CRS is not accepted in accordance with the airline authority’s regulations, the infant should be held by a responsible person with the seatbelt fastened around the responsible person for take-off, landing, when the fasten seat belt sign is illuminated, and recommended at all times while seated in case of unexpected turbulence.

Note: Currently, some States require a lap held infant to be additionally restrained by a supplemental loop belt device. When a supplemental loop belt is required, airline SOPs should require cabin crew to advise the responsible person on how to use it, and the safest orientation for the infant.

2.2 Child

A child (is 2 years of age or older) should also be restrained in an approved child restraint system which meets the product limitations (height and weight) as established by the CRS manufacturer.

If the responsible person does not provide an approved child restraint system, or if the CRS is not accepted in accordance with the airline authority’s regulations, and if the child is able to sit upright unassisted, the child should be restrained by a seat belt for take-off, landing, when the fasten seat belt sign is illuminated and recommended at all times while seated in case of unexpected turbulence. Another consideration for securing a child on board could be the use of a passenger provided aviation safety harness. Please see Section 10.1 for more details.
3. OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Not all regulators accept foreign approved child restraint systems. CRS acceptance is based on the applicable State criteria and is reflected in the airline policy. Airlines should develop policies related to the transportation of infants and children outlining the permitted use of a CRS on board. It should also include prohibited devices which may not be used on board. It should also include the types of approved CRS and their permitted use when on board their aircraft. Such criteria should include provisions stating that the CRS must:

- Only be occupied by an infant or child that meets the product limitations (height and weight) of the CRS as established by the manufacturer;
- Fit the aircraft seat dimensions; and
- Not cause any obstruction of egress in an emergency when installed.

Cabin crew should be aware of their airline’s policy and procedures surrounding the carriage of infants and children and the acceptance or prohibition of CRS for use on board. In addition, it is also important for ground staff (e.g. check-in and gate agents) to be aware of the airline’s policy and procedures related to the acceptance and prohibition of devices permitted for on board use.

The policy should mention restrictions, if any, of the amount of infants (less than 2 years of age) a single responsible person may travel with. Some States and/or airlines accept for a responsible person to have charge of only one infant. Others accept for the responsible person to have charge of two infants when one infant is restrained in a CRS and the other infant is lap held (with or without supplementary loop belt, as applicable to State regulations). Possible mitigations for a responsible person traveling with two infants is to provide a briefing to an Able-Bodied Person (ABP) who could assist the responsible person with the infant in the event of an abnormal or emergency situation.

It is also recommended that the policy include information related to when a child travels in a separate section of the aircraft than their responsible person. Some carriers implement procedures for the handling of a child of UMNR age who is traveling in a separate section of the aircraft. These procedures can include increased supervision and the handling of this child as an UMNR while on board and in this separate class of service by the cabin crew.
4. OPERATIONS WITH AN APPROVED PASSENGER-PROVIDED CRS

Airlines generally do not provide CRS for use by infants or children on board, with the exception of the supplemental loop belt type device when their use is mandated by the State. The responsible person is responsible for providing and installing their own CRS device for use on board the aircraft. The following information should be conveyed to the responsible person of an infant or child using a CRS:

- Infants and children secured in a CRS should be seated with the responsible person;
- Infant(s) and child(ren) must be secured in the CRS during taxi, take-off, landing, whenever the seat belt sign is illuminated, and recommended at all times when seated in case of unexpected turbulence.
5. INSTALLATION OF CRS ON BOARD

All devices must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer instructions of the CRS. They must also be secured using the aircraft seat belts that are fixed to the seat. The CRS should be correctly installed and secured by the occupant’s responsible person as they are most acquainted with the CRS and the applicable manufacturer’s instructions.

Cabin crew procedures should include:

- Verifying if the CRS is approved for on board use;
- Applying seat allocation restrictions (if any);
- Conducting a visual check.

Some airline procedures include the cabin crew requesting for a verbal confirmation from the responsible person that they have correctly installed and secured the device. Other airlines ask the responsible person to advise the cabin crew if they are not able to install or secure the device.

**Installation of aft-facing CRS:** Aft-facing CRSs should only be installed on forward-facing passenger seats. Aft-facing child restraint devices are usually restricted to an occupant (and usually to only an infant) weighing less than 20 pounds.

**Installation of forward-facing CRS:** Forward-facing CRSs may only when fitted in the same direction as the passenger seat. These devices are usually recommended for an infant or child weighing 20 to 65 pounds. Some forward-facing devices may accommodate children of a greater weight when this is specified on the device itself.

**Note:**

- It is imperative for all CRS to be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions;
- A CRS should not be installed within the radius of action of an airbag unless the airbag is de-activated with a seatbelt deactivator.

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6. OPERATIONS WITH OPERATOR-PROVIDED CRS

Some airlines provide CRS for infants or children. When the CRS is provided by the airline for use on board their aircraft, the cabin crew are usually responsible for installing the CRS device. The same information as stated in section 4 and section 5 (as applicable the context of an operator provided CRS) should be conveyed.

This would include:

- Infants and children secured in a CRS should be seated beside the responsible person;
- Infant(s) and child(ren) must be secured in the CRS during taxi, take-off, landing, whenever the seat belt sign is illuminated, and recommended at all times when seated in case of unexpected turbulence.

The cabin crew should also conduct a visual check to ensure the CRS is installed correctly prior to departure.
7. **PLACEMENT OF CRS ON BOARD**

Airline procedures should contain information on the placement of the CRS on board. This should address whether the use of a CRS is permitted or prohibited on unique design seats (e.g. angled or aft facing seats). The procedures should also include where the placement of a CRS is not permitted, for example:

- In an emergency exit row;
- In a row immediately forward or aft of an emergency exit row (if this is stipulated as per State regulations);
- On a seat fitted with an inflatable seat belt (unless permitted when deactivated with the manufacturer’s seat belt deactivator);
- In a location that could:
  - Prevent access to safety and emergency equipment; and/or
  - Block access to an aisle of the aircraft.

The procedures should also include the recommended location for the CRS, for example:

- A window seat is preferred location; or
- In an inner seat of a center row on dual aisle aircraft, the CRS may be placed in the center section provided that all persons in the row have unobstructed access to an aisle; and
- With the responsible person accompanying the infant or child occupying the CRS.
8. WORKING WITH THE REGULATOR

Airlines are encouraged to work with their regulator in instances when a specific CRS is certified for air travel but is not yet recognized or approved for use by their State. An equivalent level of safety (ELoS) assessment can also be submitted by the airline to review, in cooperation with their regulator, a passenger’s request to use a specific device on board.

This cooperation and information gathering could potentially lead to a regulatory change and/or exemption for the approval of use of a specific CRS or for a particular situation (e.g. a child passenger with reduced mobility).

The airline would normally conduct a risk assessment to assess the impact, if any, of the acceptance or refusal of a new type of CRS in its operations. The airline would also provide the State with information on how they would mitigate any safety concerns and meet any condition of use as stipulated by their regulator. This cooperation between the airline and State promotes child passenger safety and recognizes that an infant or child is safer when secured with a certified CRS rather than a carrier having to prohibit its use on board, on account of a specific, absent or an outdated regulation.
9. INFORMATION TO PASSENGERS REGARDING CRS COMPATIBILITY

Information to members of the travelling public is important in promoting the use or CRS on board aircraft. The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has developed a website dedicated to members of the travelling public to promote awareness and the use of a CRS on board aircraft: www.faa.gov/passengers/fly_children.

IATA calls for other regulatory authorities to consider following this example in order to provide for this same type of awareness and promotion of child passenger safety on board aircraft in their respective States.

Airlines are encouraged to share their policies on child restraint systems on their websites, via social media, inflight magazines etc. By providing advanced information to passengers, it serves to encourage the use of a CRS on board their aircraft. Providing passengers with information about the acceptance, permission of use and compatibility of a CRS prior to their flight also allows the responsible person to make an informed decision so they can best prepare and equip themselves with an approved CRS prior to travel.

Not all motor vehicle CRS are suitable for use on board. Certain CRS are quite large and may not fit into all aircraft seats. Passengers should be aware of certain aspects to take into account when considering whether a CRS is compatible for travel on board:

- Aircraft seat size (e.g. possibility of lack of space);
- Inability to effectively restrain the CRS (e.g. 3-point CRS which requires a shoulder harness, not suitable for an aircraft seat equipped only with a lap belt);
- When not suitable for use in specific seat types (e.g. angled seats).

Such information should be available to passengers pre-flight and be easily accessible and referenced, such as on the airline website, so that the traveler can determine the compatibility of their CRS with the aircraft seat and aircraft type. This information should also include:

- A list of accepted types of CRS;
- A list of prohibited types of CRS;
- The width of the passenger seat in each class of service for each model and series of aircraft in its fleet, with a disclaimer that aircraft substitutes can occur during irregular or normal operations.
It is important that this information be tailored to be comprehensible and practical to a passenger. Copy-pasting information from the airline operations manual, which is intended and written for airline employees and crewmembers, is not recommended as the information would be delivered in a more technical format.

It would also be important to convey to a passenger that:

- They will be asked to show the approval labelling to ground staff and cabin crew and to make sure they know where to find it.
- They may need to show the cabin crew that they have fitted the CRS securely and in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions; and
- That the CRS must fit securely using a normal aircraft seatbelt, as unlike in automobiles, the aircraft seat does not provide an ISOFIX systems or seatbelts that are worn over the shoulder (unless shoulder seatbelts are provided in premium class seats (non-angled seats));
- If a passenger is not using a CRS for a child in an angled seat, it is recommended to advise them that the recommended seating for the child is directly next and in front of the responsible person so that can see them.

9.1 Sample of labels

Airlines are encouraged to include samples of labels of accepted CRS in both their operations manual (OM) and on their external airline website. This will enable front line staff to validate the acceptance of the child restraint device. In addition, this information, when provided in advance, enables responsible person to make informed decisions on what child restraint system will be accepted for use on board. The labels should be legible and clear. These often include language such as:

- “This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft”;
- “Approved for aircraft use only”.

It is recommended that a notation for passengers intending to travel with an infant or child to check with the airline prior to booking a flight, especially when a trip involves multiple flight segments on other airlines, as not all airlines are regulated with the same criteria of acceptance of CRS on board.
Some sample labels include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian/New Zealand Approved Labelling</th>
<th>EU Approved Labelling:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Australian/New Zealand Approved Labelling" /></td>
<td>✓ Approved for use in motor vehicles according to the UN standard “ECE R 44, -03” or later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Australian/New Zealand Approved Labelling" /></td>
<td>✓ ‘Qualification Procedure for Child Restraint Systems for Use in Aircraft’ (TÜV Doc.: TÜV/958-01/2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAA Approved Labelling</th>
<th>Canadian Approved Labelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved for use in motor vehicles and aircraft according to US FMVSS No. 213</td>
<td>Standard CMVSS 213/213.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2 Sample label depicting a Device or CRS not meeting operational requirements

Should an airline prohibit the use of certain devices or types of CRS, they should identify the types of devices or CRS in the operations manual for cabin crew awareness. The airline should also provide passengers with this information prior to their flight so responsible person can make an informed decision on and which types of devices or CRS are approved for use on board.

Examples of prohibited devices or types of CRS could include:

- Booster seats;
- Any vests and or sling type device;
- A CRS which is only certified for use with a 3-point harness seat belt (shoulder strap), as most of the aircraft cabin seats are certified with a 2-point harness seat belt. This type of CRS may not be accepted for use on board or may only be permitted in classes of service with seats that are equipped with a 3-point harness (shoulder strap).

Please see extract below, detailing manufacturer “Warning information”.

![Warning Label]

- Failure to follow all instructions and product labels can result in death or serious injury in a crash. Carefully read and understand all instructions on this child restraint and in the written instructions. If you have questions, contact Convaid at 1-888-CONVAID (266-8243).
- Use only with children who weigh between 30 and 108 pounds (mass between 13.6 and 49 kg) and whose height is between 37 and 60 inches (94 and 152 cm).
- Use only in a forward-facing position.
- Use restraint ONLY with forward-facing vehicle seats. Do not use restraint with side-facing, rear-facing or flip-down vehicle seats.
- According to accident statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends the vehicles' rear seat is the safest location for a properly installed child restraint system.
- Do not use a child restraint in the front seat of the vehicle unless the passenger air bag is turned off. Death or serious injury can occur. Refer to your vehicle owners manual for instruction, warnings, and precautions.
- Adjust the harnesses and belts for a comfortable and snug fit around your child. There should not be any slack or twist in the straps, and the straps should not press on the child’s skin or push the child’s body into an unnatural position.
- Never leave a child unattended in the vehicle even if they are secured in the child restraint.
- Secure this restraint to the vehicle's seat with the upper top tether strap and lower anchor straps (LATCH).
- Use this child restraint only with vehicles with lap shoulder 3-point safety belts approved by FMVSS 209.
- Rigid items & plastic parts of the restraint system must be located and installed so they do not become trapped by a movable seat or in a door of the vehicle.
9.3 Sample pictorials

Specified diagrams should be included to facilitate understanding when an airline accepts CRS with:

- 3-point harness only; or
- 2-point harness only, or
- Both (as applicable to the aircraft seat designs in the respective aircraft cabins)

9.4 CRS requiring a 3-point harness

Some airlines may have seats equipped with a 3-point harness installed. These are usually seen in premium class seats. Where such a belt is installed, the CRS depicted below would meet the manufacturer’s installation requirement and therefore would be suitable for use on board.

![3-point harness diagram]

9.5 CRS requiring a 2-point harness

An example of an aft facing CRS that may be used on board and is to be secured with a 2-point harness:

![2-point harness diagram]
9.6 CRS that can be secured in the aft and forward facing position with a 2-point harness
10. OTHER DEVICES THAT PROMOTE CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

IATA does not promote any specific product or brand but rather seeks to raise awareness on some additional devices that are available and approved by some regulatory authorities for use on board aircraft. IATA encourages States to allow airlines to accept these on board.

10.1 Aviation Safety Harness for Children

If the State permits airlines to accept the use of a passenger provided aviation safety harness, it is recommended that the airline also include information and pictorials related to their acceptance and approval of use on board. This should include a notation that these must be installed and used according to the manufacturer’s instructions and/or a link to the supplier’s webpage for ease of access to this information. Some supplier’s provide installation videos and it can be recommended by the airline or State for the responsible person to view video instructions prior to their travel as they will be responsible for installing the device and ensuring their child is secure.

10.2 Infant Cradle System (Certified for During Turbulence)

Infant cradle systems are commercially available to airlines and are designed and certified for use during turbulence provided that the safety features (e.g. belts) are used according to the manufacturer’s instructions. These cradles are designed for infants up to a defined weight. It is recommended that the responsible person is able to reach the cradle with their own seatbelt fastened.

The cradle can be mounted on a bulkhead and it is certified for use during turbulence, reducing the need to disturb and remove the infant. This is especially useful during unexpected turbulence when it could be difficult, challenging or riskier to remove the infant. In cases of expected turbulence, especially for turbulence levels exceeding light turbulence, the safest place to secure an infant is in their CRS.
10.3 Travel Chairs for Children with Reduced Mobility

Airlines are encouraged to provide information for the responsible person requiring special assistance for travel with a child with reduced mobility.

There are a variety of comfort and support seating aids permitted to be used if the State permits, provided the use of the aircraft seatbelt remains part of the restraint system. If secured with a strap around the upper part of the seat, the seat behind should remain unoccupied unless seat certification and testing shows that Head Injury Criterion (HIC) regulations can be complied with.

Examples include Travel Chairs which provide postural support for disabled children who may otherwise be unable to travel by air.

If the State permits airlines to accept use of specific airline and/or passenger approved travel chairs, it is recommended that the airline also include information and pictorials related to their acceptance, location and approval for use on board. This should include a notation that these travel chairs must be installed and used according to the manufacturer’s and airline’s instructions.

The UK CAA has determined that an aircraft operator may accept its use under the future provisions of the EASA Air Operations Regulation, CAT.OP.MPA.225. For more information, please go to: [www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/SafetyNotice2012015.pdf](http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/SafetyNotice2012015.pdf)
11. EVACUATIONS WITH INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Airlines should have procedures for cabin crew that are specific to the evacuation of infants and children. The responsible person should be made aware to remove the infant or child from the CRS for the evacuation process and to always leave the CRS behind.

In a planned emergency evacuation, the responsible person should be briefed to hug their infant to them so that they can evacuate down the slide together. When boarding an escape device (e.g. slide, slide raft, ramp slide) with infants, jumping together onto the escape device produces faster egress than sitting and sliding.

The carrying positions that provide the most protection for infants include:

- **Vertical position:** The responsible person should protect the infant’s head and neck as much as possible with one hand, placing the other arm around the buttocks and holding the infant with their legs around the adult’s waist;

- **Horizontal position:** The responsible person should cradle the infant’s head and neck in their arm and should keep infant’s arms, legs and feet enfolded as much as possible in their arms.

Climbing through a Type III over-wing exit while holding an infant promotes faster egress than passing the infant to another passenger who has already exited. The recommended carrying position of the infant is vertical. Horizontal carrying of larger infants is more likely to result in striking a part of the infant's body on the exit frame.

Evacuation methods with children over the age of two would depend on the age and size of the child. The carrying method when egressing should be the one most comfortable and natural for the parent/responsible person and the child and, at the same time, providing adequate protection for the child and ensuring a fast egress from the aircraft.

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3 EASA, Safety Information Bulletin (SIB), No.: 2013-06, Issued: 17 May 2013, Evacuation of Infants