

**Don’t Make These Common Car Seat Safety Mistakes**

More than 66,000 babies were born in Colorado in 2019, meaning plenty of new parents across the state have questions about how to best care for their newborn. [Car Seats Colorado](https://www.codot.gov/safety/carseats), a joint effort between the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado State Patrol, would like to help new parents avoid some common mistakes when buying, installing or securing their child in a car seat. **These** **common pitfalls include:**

1. Using car seat anchor attachments and a seat belt at the same time
While this may seem like added protection, the two systems can interfere with each other and actually make the car seat less secure.
2. Accepting a used car seat without knowing its entire history
Even if it’s not visible, car seats that have been in a crash can have structural damage. And most car seats expire after six years – partly because summer heat, winter cold and year-round sunshine break down and weaken seat materials. Never use a second-hand car seat unless you know its ENTIRE history and it hasn’t yet reached its expiration date.
3. Straining the budget by thinking the most expensive car seat is the best
All new car seats have to pass the same stringent crash safety standards set by the federal government. Infant car seats that cost $50 are just as safe as those that will run you $500.
4. Failing to check for recalls
Last year alone, recalls affected 755,000 individual car seats. Check if yours is on the list every few months to make sure a new recall hasn’t been issued. Register for recall alerts at [CarSeatsColorado.com](https://www.codot.gov/safety/carseats/for-parents-and-caregivers/for-parents-caregivers) to ensure you get timely recall information from the manufacturer.
5. Strapping in a baby wearing bulky winter clothes
Car seat straps must be snug to protect a child in the event of a crash. Bulky winter coats or snowsuits create room between the straps and the child, increasing the force of an impact.
6. Attaching toys or after-market add-ons to the car seat
Toys, cup holders, rear-seat mirrors or anything else not originally included with the car seat can act as a projectile during a crash. Keep the seat and surrounding area free from clutter.
7. Moving your child to the next car seat before they’re ready
A child’s age, height, weight and physical development, as well as the car seat manufacturer’s recommendations, should all be considered before you move your child to the next type of car seat – NOT just their age. If you’re unsure of when to move to the next seat, visit a car seat inspection station to have your seat checked by a certified child passenger safety technician.
8. Putting baby in front of an air bag
Unless you’re driving a two-seat pickup truck, your infant should never be in the front seat. However, if you must, make sure the air bag is turned off — the force of the bag deployment can cause serious injury.

Watch installation and safety videos, download the latest educational materials, find links to recall lists and learn more about car seat recycling programs at [CarSeatsColorado.com](https://www.codot.gov/safety/carseats).