

Restraint of Children with Disabilities in Motor Vehicles

We recommend the same procedures for adults

- People with disabilities often require special consideration when being restrained in motor vehicles.
- Restraining a child with a permanent disability requires long-term solutions that need to be reassessed as the child grows.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard is specifically designed and designated as suitable for use by a person with a cognitive or behavioural disorder where they do not understand the need to remain restrained when travelling in a motor vehicle.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard is made from clear plastic to conform to Australian Standard AS/NZS 4370, which recommends that the protector allow full view of the buckle.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard should be prescribed by a health professional who is familiar with the client's physical and physiological status and lifestyle. Prescribers should consider all options such as using restraints compliant with AS/NZ 4370:2013, increasing supervision, considering unintended consequences etc, before prescribing the Buckleguard. **The Standard is that a letter is obtained from the user's prescriber, and kept in the vehicle where the seat belt restraint is used.** The letter should outline the medical condition/ disability reason why the Buckleguard has been prescribed as a seat belt restraint. We recommend the same process for adult users.
- While the Buckleguard is one available option for users to travel safely, as a product on its own, cannot be unilaterally compliant with the Standard. Rather, the Standard recommends prescribers follow its decision process when prescribing seat belt restraints in order to be compliant.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard can only be used with the permission from the parents or legal guardian. If anyone else is using this device, they must have authority and instruction from the client's parent / guardian. This includes carers, centre staff, bus drivers, taxi drivers etc.
- Carers should have access to all available information about motor vehicle travel of children with disabilities, e.g. fact sheets or pamphlets.
- Organisations responsible for transporting people with disabilities should develop policies and procedures designed to assist in achieving safe travel.
- The driver of the vehicle must be familiar with how to release the Seat Belt Buckle Guard.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard is *not* to be used to restrain the client except for travel in motor vehicles.
- The Seat Belt Buckle Guard is *not* to be used to restrain children who are not diagnosed as having a disability that requires alternative restraint.