

UPDATE

Children’s car seats and booster cushions: How long are they safe?

All children’s car seats and booster cushions sold in Canada have an expiry or useful life date on them, even though this is not required by regulation. Manufacturers do this to inform current owners and prospective buyers of the potential risks of using car seats and booster cushions that may be missing important parts, labels or instructions and/or may have an unknown history which could lead to less than optimal safe performance when needed. People should not use children’s car seats and booster cushions past their expiry or useful life date.

Manufacturers give an expiry or useful life date because over time:

- frequent use and exposure to sunlight can damage and weaken plastic;
- safe-use labels on the products fade or become hard to read;
- instruction manuals have likely been lost;
- food, cleaners, drinks and other materials that have been spilled or used on webbing, buckles, adjusters and other parts may prevent them from working safely;
- the history or condition of the car seat or booster cushion becomes hard to check (was it in an accident, was it stored in a place or in a way that caused damage to parts, etc.?)
- safety regulations and standards may have changed, so safer products may now be on the market; and
- second or subsequent owners may not get product safety recall notices if problems arise.

In Canada, all provinces and territories require infants and toddlers to be buckled up in the appropriate car seat. Several provinces also require booster cushions for children who have outgrown a child car seat but are too small for a regular seat belt. The provincial and territorial laws also say that the children’s car seats and booster cushions must be certified to Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and must be used according to the manufacturer’s instructions. If you don’t follow the instructions, or if you use them past their expiry or useful life dates - you may be putting your child’s safety at risk and you may be found guilty of breaking the law.

Listed below, in alphabetical order, are the manufacturers who sell car seats and/or booster cushions in Canada, the brand name and the useful life period of their products. Depending on the make or model, they can be used safely for five to nine years. Transport Canada strongly advises parents and caregivers to follow all of the manufacturer’s instructions and respect the expiry or useful life dates.

Manufacturer	Brand Name(s)	Product Type¹	Useful Life
Britax Child Safety, Inc.	Britax Frontier	I/C, B	6 years
		C/B	9 years
Chicco USA, Inc.	Chicco	I	6 years
Combi USA, Inc.	Combi	I, B	7 years
Dorel Juvenile Group, Inc.	Cosco, Eddie Bauer, Safety 1 st Maxi Cosi	I, I/C, C/B, B	6 years
		I	6 years
		I/C/B	8 years
Evenflo Company Inc.	Evenflo	I, I/C, C/B, B	6 years
Graco Children’s Products	Graco Nautilus (low back booster only)	I, I/C, C/B, B	6 years
		B	9 years
Learning Curve Brands, Inc.	Compass, The First Years	I, I/C, B	7 years
Magna Aftermarket Inc.	Clek	B	7 years
Peg-Pérego S.p.A.	Peg-Pérego	I	5 years
Sunshine Kids Juvenile Products, LLC	Sunshine Kids Monterey	I/C	8 years
		B	6 years
Note 1: I = Infant; I/C = Infant and Child; B = Booster; C/B = Child and Booster; I/C/B = Infant, Child and Booster			

