

Stepped Up Law Enforcement Patrols to Focus on Grays Harbor County Child Car Seat Violations

Local News

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Between June 19 and July 2, Grays Harbor County law enforcement will once again commit extra patrols for Child Car Seat Violations. The law enforcement officers who are participating in the emphasis patrols have been through intensive child passenger safety training, some of whom are certified car seat technicians.

With summer upon us, the timing coincides with more kids riding in cars, perhaps improperly. As they ramp up for another round of child car seat-focused patrols, law enforcement officers want parents to know that kids up to age 13 need to ride in the back seat or it's a substantial ticket: \$124.

With the first-ever Click it or Ticket-style patrols focused on child car seat use, law enforcement saw a number of cases where kids were riding up front.

In Grays Harbor County, the top few violations found by law enforcement included:

Putting children in the front seat - kids must ride in the back seat until they are age 13. Parent putting young children in booster seats too soon. Children up to about age four need to ride in the child car seats with the five-point harness. Putting children in seat belts when they should be in booster seats. Boosters are needed until a child is 4'9" tall.

"Our goal with the project isn't to write tickets, but to get kids buckled up according to Washington's child car seat law which will reduce serious injuries and traffic deaths involving children, said Lowell Porter,

To abide by Washington law and for the best protection for their children, parents should try to adhere to the following when buckling up their child: Child ages: 0 - at least 12 months and at least 20 pounds - use a rear-facing infant seat. Keep your child rear-facing as long as your child car seat allows. Age: 13 months to age four - use a child car seat with a five-point harness. Age: four to 4'9" tall - use a booster seat. Boosters should only be placed with a lap and shoulder belt. Age: up to age 13 - children must ride in the rear seat of the vehicle.

Most parents, according to the law enforcement officers, understand that infants need to ride rear-facing and not in front of an air bag. The newer models of infant seats allow a child to ride rear-facing for up to two years, which adds an important protective element.

Participating in this effort to reduce child car seat violations and improve child passenger safety are the Grays Harbor County Sheriff's Office and the Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Montesano Police Departments.

The local pilot project is coordinated by the Grays Harbor County Traffic Safety Task Force. Similar projects will be running concurrently in the Spokane, Moses Lake, and Wenatchee areas. The \$508,500 total project budget will cover patrols, training, public service announcements, signage, car

seats, printing and research to measure the effectiveness of the project.

Parents needing more information about correctly installing their child car seat or about this project can call the Grays Harbor County Traffic Safety Task Force at 360.249.3711 ext 576.or visit <http://www.800buckleup.org/>.