

New Safety Belt Requirements for the Organised Transport of Children on Buses

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) are today, Monday 26th September 2011, informing bus owners and drivers that as of 31st October 2011 it will be a legal requirement that buses involved in the organised transport of children be fitted with appropriate and fit for purpose safety belts or restraint systems. This new requirement is also of importance to individuals and organisations involved in hiring or contracting bus services for children.

This applies to the transportation of a group of 3 or more children where transporting the children is the primary reason for the journey. This includes school transport bus services, school trips or organised outings such as sporting or social events, etc. It does not include the transport of children on bus services offered to the general public (i.e. scheduled urban or inter-urban bus services). Buses involved in the Departments of Education's School Transport Scheme have been required to be fitted with safety belts since January 2007.

Organisations or individuals engaged in hiring or contracting bus services for the organised transport of children should ensure that the vehicle used is fitted with safety belts and that these safety belts meet the required standards.

The majority of buses in the national fleet should have documentation to show that their safety belts or restraint systems meet the required standards. This is due to the additional requirement, introduced in October 2010, as part of the roadworthiness test, where owners of buses have been required to present certification showing that the vehicle's safety belts were installed to an acceptable standard.

It remains the legal responsibility of a bus owner and driver to ensure that their vehicle, and all its components, is in such a condition that no danger is likely to be caused to any person. This includes having the correct certification for their vehicle's safety belts or restraint systems, ensuring they are fully functional and maintained in a fit for purpose state.

For more information on these new requirements please visit our dedicated [safety belts on buses webpage](#) or contact the Road Safety Authority at **096-25014** or at vehiclestandards@rsa.ie.

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