

Attn: Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers,

The Governor signed Substitute House Bill 320 into law on Tuesday, January 6th. According to the news release I received, law enforcement will issue warning only for the first 6 months. Full enforcement, including citations, will begin on or about November 6, 2009. The Director of the Ohio Department of Health is responsible for adapting rules to establish enforcement criteria for determining compliance. The changes to the existing law are as follows.

House Bill 320 had passed the Senate by 27 to 5 vote on December 17th with the following changes to the existing child restraint law:

- Kids age 4-8 **OR** 4'9" must be in a booster seat - a 6yr old 4'10" child is exempt as is a 9 yr old 4'2" child
- This part is secondary enforcement (Child Restraints remain primary to 4 and 40)
- Vehicles with lap only belts exempt as are taxis and public safety vehicles
- Chiropractor or physician may issue an affidavit of exemption, but need to address how the child should
- Life threatening emergencies are exempt safely be restrained in the vehicle on the affidavit
- Multiple kids not in boosters in one vehicle will be only one violation
- Fine minimum \$25 - max \$75 for 1st offense subsequent are M4
- Judges will have ability to give unaccompanied driving privileges to 17 year old probationary drivers with a first traffic offense. Currently on a first offense violation these under 18 drivers had to go back to having someone with them.

The existing child restraint law for children up to 4 years old and 40 pounds is still primary (officers can stop motorists just for not having their child in a car seat), and requires those children to be in an approved properly used child restraint system.

Children from 8 years old (or taller than 4'9") to 15 years old must be in either a seat belt or other restraint system.

Ohio's seat belt law remains unchanged, governing front seat occupants and remaining as secondary enforcement.

Booster seats come in several styles. Make sure your child always uses a lap & shoulder combination seat belt with the booster seat, and make sure your child has a head support either built into the vehicle, or a high-back booster to protect the child's neck.

For information about Child Passenger Safety, please contact the Health Department at 330-627-4866.

~~Valerie Wohlwend, Coordinator~~

~~Safe Kids Carroll County~~