

CHILD CAR SEAT Expiry Dates



Why do child car seats have expiry dates?

Manufacturers give an expiry date because over time: ¹

- safety regulations or standards may have changed bringing safer products on to the market
- safe use labels on products fade or become hard to read
- instruction manuals have likely been lost
- frequent use and exposure to sunlight can damage and weaken plastic
- food, drinks, cleaners and other materials that may have been spilled or used on webbing and other parts may prevent them from working safely
- second or subsequent owner may not get product safety information
- the history or condition of the restraint becomes hard to check

How do I find and understand the expiry date?

Most seats have a Date of Manufacture (DOM). The expiry date then needs to be calculated based on the life span of the seat. The life span is usually available from the manufacturer's website or by contacting your retailer or Plunket.

Many seats will have a label on the side or underneath the seat showing the Date of Manufacture. Others have DOM Clocks which can be more difficult to decipher.

See examples below...

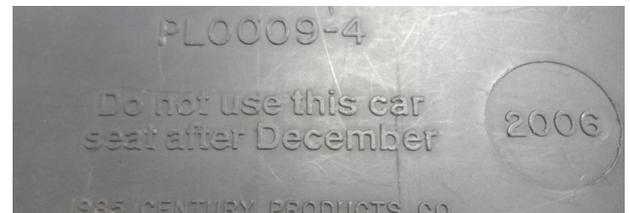
Some restraint manufacturers now recommend that the life of their restraints be taken from the date of purchase, this includes Britax, Evenflo and InfaSecure, effective from mid 2015.

However if you do not have a purchase receipt, the life commences from the date of manufacture on the restraint. If in doubt please contact the manufacturer.

Date of Manufacture



Expiry Date



DOM Clocks Date of Manufacture is indicated by arrow on 'clock' face.



If in doubt about how to read these or any date of manufacture/expiry dates, please ask [your qualified child restraint technician](#).

1. Source: Transport Canada 14563- Consumer Information Notice, 2011-CO1 E.



Manufacturers give expiry dates because:



Frequent use and sun exposure can damage seat components and weaken plastic (eg. fraying, cracking and white stress marks on plastic)



Safety standards change bringing safer products to market (eg. changes to harnesses)



Accidents

Common advice seems to be that a child car seat that has been involved in a significant vehicle accident should be replaced, even if there is no visible damage. The seat may have been weakened to such an extent that it will not provide the same level of protection in another accident.

Plunket's recommendation:

"On the recommendation of child car restraint manufacturers, the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society (Inc.) requires that all child restraints in a vehicle at the time of a crash, other than a very minor one, be destroyed. This is any crash where the main body structure of the vehicle is distorted in any way.

There is no way a child restraint can be tested to ensure it has suffered no damage and will perform as it should with future use. Therefore, to protect the child and ensure the restraint is in good working order it is strongly recommended that the restraint be destroyed and replaced with a new one."

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provides the following advice:

- NHTSA recommends child safety seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash in order to ensure a continued high level of crash protection for child passengers.
- Child safety seats do not automatically need to be replaced following a minor crash. Minor crashes are those that meet ALL of the following criteria:
 - The vehicle was able to be driven away from the crash site;
 - The vehicle door nearest the safety seat was undamaged;
 - There were no injuries to any of the vehicle occupants;
 - The air bags (if present) did not deploy; AND
 - There is no visible damage to the safety seat

This information is provided as a guide only. If you are in any doubt as to whether you should replace your child car seat please contact [your qualified child restraint technician](#).

For more info visit www.seatsmart.co.nz
or call 0508 374 768