

Information Note

New Regulations requiring Buses Involved in the Organised Transport of Children to be fitted with Safety Belts

Important Regulations concerning children and safety belts on buses come into effect on the 31 October 2011. The Road Traffic (Restraint Systems in Organised Transport of Children) Regulations (Statutory Instrument No. 367 of 2011) make it a legal requirement that all buses involved in the organised transport of children must be fitted with appropriate and fit for purpose safety belts or restraint systems.

Organised transport in this regard is a group of 3 or more children undertaking a journey where the children's transport is the primary reason for the journey. This includes school transport bus services, school trips or other organised outings such as sporting or social events, etc. The organised transport of children does not include the transport of children on bus services offered to the general public (i.e. scheduled urban or inter-urban bus services).

In recent years the Irish Government has taken a number of actions to ensure the safety of children travelling on buses and to ensure that the safety belts or restraint systems fitted to a bus are fit for purpose and safe. Part of this process was the requirement that all buses contracted to the Department of Education and Skills school transport scheme be fitted with safety belts and these safety belts inspected to ensure they were of an appropriate standard.

Further to this all bus owners, since 31 October 2010, have been required to present certification at their vehicle's roadworthiness test showing its safety belt or restraint systems were installed to an acceptable standard. By 31 October 2011 the majority of buses in the current fleet will have undergone this check and as a result will have documentation to show their safety belts or restraint systems meet the required standards.

It should be noted that it remains the legal responsibility of a bus owner and driver to ensure that their vehicle, and all components of that vehicle, is in compliance with Road Traffic Regulations and in such a condition that no danger is likely to be caused to any person. This includes having the correct certification for the safety belts or restraint systems.

Failure [by bus drivers and owners](#) to comply with the requirement to have safety belts on buses involved in the organised transport of children may result in a fine of up to €2,000, imprisonment for up to three months or both.

Organisations or individuals engaged in hiring or contracting bus services or organised transport for children should ensure that the vehicle used is fitted with safety belts. 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 vehiclestandards@rsa.ie