

Warning! Use of Fleece Inserts in Car Seats May Be Dangerous to Your Child!

During the colder months, many parents purchase products such as fleece car seat/stroller inserts to keep their babies warm while travelling. As a result, certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians have noticed an increase in use of these inserts (referred to as non-regulated products because there is no federal standard for testing/certifying such products) during car seat inspection events.

It is important to know that use of these products is prohibited by most car seat manufacturers, and thereby violates the correct-use provision of Maryland's Child Passenger Safety Law (Maryland Vehicle Code § 22-412.2). The following excerpts from a few car seat instructions are examples:

Graco SnugRide and SafeSeat1

DO NOT MODIFY YOUR INFANT RESTRAINT AND BASE or use any accessories or parts supplied by other manufacturers.

Evenflo Embrace

DO NOT attach additional padding, toys or other devices not made by Evenflo or described in these instructions to the child restraint. Items not tested with the child restraint could injure the child.

Britax Marathon

The use of non-Britax Child Safety, Inc. covers, inserts, toys, accessories, or tightening devices is not approved by Britax. Their use could cause this restraint to fail Federal Safety Standards or perform worse in a crash. Their use automatically voids the Britax warranty.

Also, adding products under or behind a child's body in the car seat usually prevents proper harness adjustment and increases the risk of the child being ejected during a collision.

Maryland Kids In Safety Seats contacted several car seat manufacturers to obtain statements about the use of non-regulated products (including fleece inserts) with their car seats.

Below are excerpts from various car seat manufacturers' responses:

From Evenflo:

"...we have no choice but to continue to prohibit the use of add-on products with our child restraints.

They (manufacturers) would need to provide test data from a 3rd party lab regarding specific testing with Evenflo seats in all use modes before we could change our position.

They would also need to provide test data indicating that the accessories meet FMVSS (Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard) 302 flammability requirements....”

####

From Britax:

“...The use of non–Britax covers, inserts, toys, accessories, or tightening devices is not approved by Britax. Their use could cause this restraint to fail Federal Safety Standards or perform worse in a crash. Their use automatically voids the Britax warranty.

Britax does not support the use of a 3rd party device that Britax has not tested and certified our seats with.”

####

From Chicco:

“Chicco does not allow use of anything, such as the [fleece insert], that goes behind or under your baby with its car seats. These types of products can interfere with proper harness performance in a crash. It is critical for your child’s safety that the harness on a car seat is used the way it has been designed and crash-tested by the car seat manufacturer.”

####

To keep your baby warm and safe, Maryland Kids In Safety Seats offers these suggestions:

- ✓ Dress baby/child in lightweight, yet warm clothing with legs.
- ✓ Place blankets over baby/child after securing harness.
- ✓ If possible, unzip the fleece insert and use just the top portion as a blanket.
- ✓ If purchasing a seat for a newborn, select an infant-only seat with a “winter boot and blanket” feature.

Not sure if your car seat prohibits the use of non-regulated products? Please read your car seat owner’s manual or contact your car seat manufacturer. For general child passenger safety questions, please contact Maryland Kids In Safety Seats at 800-370-SEAT.