

- Every vehicle should be checked for air bags.
- Owner's manuals have information about and instructions for air bags for specific vehicles. For example, some newer vehicles can sense when a child is in the front seat and will turn off the front air bag and sometimes the side air bag. In other newer vehicles, this feature is not available.
- Technicians need to think about where children can safely sit in a vehicle so that the air bags do not get in the way of their protection.
- Follow both vehicle and CR manufacturer instructions.
- Vehicle makers suggest that children are safer in the rear seat. It is strongly recommended that all children under age 13 should travel in the rear seat.

CLASSROOM NOTES:



- Active protection requires action by the occupant. Most of what has been discussed in this course is about active protection.
- Use of the lap-only belt is OK only when no other option exists.

CLASSROOM NOTES:



- Air bags can be almost anywhere in a vehicle, so proper positioning and use of restraints are needed to prevent injury when a crash happens and an air bag opens suddenly. Child occupants are at great risk for injury if they are not properly positioned to benefit from the air bags.
- Read the owner's manual very carefully and assume all air bags are fully active unless the owner's manual says something different. If there are any questions, advise the vehicle owner to contact the vehicle maker.
- Avoid having your body or other objects blocking the air bag. Occupants should always sit in an upright position, buckled into the seat belt.

Driver air bag:

- Generally opens in frontal crashes
- Found in the steering wheel

Front seat passenger air bags:

- Generally open in crashes that occur in the front of the car
- Some cover middle and right front passenger seating positions, some only the right front seating position.
- Found in instrument panel

Side air bags:

- Generally open in crashes that occur on the side of the car
- Found in the door or the vehicle seat

CLASSROOM NOTES:

Inflatable curtains:

- Generally open in crashes that occur on the side of the car or when the car rolls over
- Cover one or more rows of seats
- Found above doors at the edge of the roof

Knee air bags:

- Generally open in crashes that occur in the front of the car
- Found under steering columns or lower instrument panel

How Do Air Bags Protect People?

- Spread the crash forces over a large part of the body
- Are used one time only; must be replaced after a crash
- Must be used with seat belt

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- Air bags offer powerful protection to people in the vehicle who are correctly seated and restrained. The air bag adds extra protection to the adult head and chest in a crash.
- Children who are seated in front of air bags are generally much shorter than adults and therefore must be securely restrained by shoulder belts to keep the head and shoulders back and away from the air bag.
- It is recommended that all children under 13 ride in a back seat to avoid contact with the front seat air bag system. They are almost always safer in the back seat.
- Using the air bag with a seat belt system allows the impact from the crash to spread over a very large part of the occupant's body. This helps occupants take less impact on a smaller part of the body.

- Air bags are released once and must be replaced after a crash.
- Air bags are released at different impact forces, which vary by model year of the vehicle and many other factors.
- Older vehicles may have more powerful air bags.
- All occupants must be properly positioned in front of the air bag and wearing their seat belt correctly to gain the best benefit from the air bag.
- Occupants must be prepared at all times for a crash.

CLASSROOM NOTES:

Key Point:

- If there is no owner's manual present in the vehicle, a parent should contact the vehicle maker to obtain correct information about the vehicle's air bags. If this is not possible, then the best practice is to not put a CR near an active air bag.



- You will help families learn where their air bags are. Many people are unaware of all the air bags located in their vehicle.
- Check warning labels. Look around the vehicle and be sure to check the vehicle owner's manual.

CLASSROOM NOTES:

- May have a vehicle sensor that can tell when a CR is in the front seat.
- The owner's manual can tell you if an air bag was present at the time the vehicle was made. Used vehicles may show a label when in fact the previous owner may have had the air bag shut off.

A vehicle owner may have an air bag on-off switch installed if:

- A rear-facing infant must be transported in the front seat.
- Children under 13 must be transported in the front seat.
- Drivers cannot change their driving position (10 inches from the air bag).
- There is an existing medical condition that would warrant deactivation.

To apply for an air bag on-off switch, the vehicle owner:

- Must read an informational brochure.
- Send a written request to NHTSA (visit <http://www.safercar.gov> and click on air bags under Equipment and Safety).

See Appendix for more information about the on/off switch application.



