

3 April 2013

Child Restraints Amendment  
Rules Team  
NZ Transport Agency  
Private Bag 6995  
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**SUBMISSION on  
Land Transport (Road User) Amendment Rule 2013  
Rule 61001/8**

**Introduction**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on Land Transport (Road User) Amendment Rule 2013, Rule 61001/8.

This submission is from Consumer NZ, New Zealand's leading consumer organisation. It has an acknowledged and respected reputation for independence, and fairness as a provider of impartial, and comprehensive consumer information and advice.

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**Summary**

1. Consumer NZ welcomes the changes proposed in the Amendment.
2. We particularly support raising the age limit for mandatory restraint use to the age of 7.
3. However, Consumer NZ considers that the amendment does not go far enough, and that the age limit should be progressively raised to 12 years, in annual increments starting with 8 years in November 2014.
4. Consumer NZ submits that a height limit for transitioning to an adult belt should also be introduced. This should be set at a minimum of 148cm, and the final rule should include the age of 12 years or a height of 148cm, whichever comes first.

### **Comment on the main proposals:**

1. Consumer NZ agrees that the mandatory use of child restraints should be extended to all passengers who are aged under seven (ie until their seventh birthday) and that the requirement for children aged seven to be restrained in an appropriate child restraint if one is available should also be kept.
2. We agree with an extension of the current provision that allows a child not to use a child restraint, for medical reasons, to all children of any age, provided that a medical certificate can be shown to law enforcement officers.
3. Consumer NZ agrees that removing the exemption for a driver of a goods vehicle having an unladen weight exceeding 2000 kg, in which seatbelts are not available, from ensuring that passengers under five years of age are restrained, is appropriate.

### **Consumer NZ Supplementary Proposal**

1. Consumer NZ proposes that the age limit be progressively raised, one year at a time over the period 2014 (raising the age to until the 8<sup>th</sup> birthday on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 2014) to 2018.
2. A height minimum should also be introduced. i.e: A child should be restrained in an appropriate child restraint (Booster seat) until a height of 148cm is reached, or until the age set in the rule is reached, whichever comes first.
3. Studies show that Booster Seats can reduce the risk of serious and life-threatening injuries to 5 to 9 year old children by 52%. (Safekids, quoting Dr. Liz Segedin of Starship's Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.)
4. Booster seats with adjustable backrests are readily available, which means a one-off purchase can protect a child from the age of 5 to 12, or to the height of 148 cm which means a child can use an adult seat without undue risk.
5. In many cases, a carefully considered purchase to satisfy the proposed Amendment to the Rule could meet the requirements of our Consumer proposal at *no extra cost* until the age or height criteria is met.