

# Klassic Korner for Kids - Car Seats

*Written by Karen Hutchinson*

For decades after the automobile's invention, child seats were less about safety and more about keeping the kid contained in the car. This is really not surprising as occupant safety wasn't a high priority in the early days of automobiles. It wasn't until 1959 that a 3-point seat belt (lap-shoulder belt) was even available in cars. Today, buckling a child into a car seat is part of every journey, but there was a time when children were not restrained at all and when car seats were for convenience rather than safety.

Car cribs were first introduced in the 1920s as a way to keep kids contained in moving vehicles. The Gordon Motor Crib Co. of Chicago, IL. advertised "No more weary arms and tired babies. Asleep or awake baby really enjoys motoring. Mother, too, may ride in comfort, or drive if she chooses."



In the 1930s, the Bunny Bear Company of Everett, MA manufactured what were basically booster seats, propping up children so they could see out the window and parents could keep an eye on them. A toy steering wheel was added so the child could pretend to drive.



In the '40s, many more companies manufactured cloth seats on metal or wood frames that attached to the car's front seat so young children could get a better view out the windshield.



Nash Thought of the Children, too, in the World's Finest Travel Car!



In 1949, a Frazer advertisement showed a young child riding in a "booster seat." In 1956 Nash, "the world's finest travel car," featured a front passenger seat that reclined into the back seat to create a bed large enough to accommodate two children. Comfort was king and safety had yet to be considered.



## The Use Seatbelts in Classic Cars

*By Colin Gurnsey*

The standard structure of automobiles began to change significantly during the 1960s. Manufacturers introduced uni-bodied automobiles, began crash testing and introduced designs that provided for selective structural failure to absorb the shock of impact. All of these measures were designed to improve passenger safety. Seat belts were but one of the many safety measures required of automobile manufacturers.

A search of available literature suggests standardized seat belts became available in automobiles beginning about 1964. Automobiles manufactured prior to that date are exempt from seat belts in most jurisdictions. The wording of later legislation pertaining to restraints for minor children though is a bit more ambiguous. Some of the legislation requires manufacturers to provide seatbelts while other legislation, specifically focused on children, requires children to be properly secured in a vehicle.

Again, for most jurisdictions, there are two sets of law codes to refer to regarding seat belts or occupant restraint laws. The first code being the jurisdiction in which you live. For Seattleites it would be the Revised Code of Washington followed by the Code of Federal Regulations. In British Columbia where I live it would be respectively the Provincial Statute followed by the Federal laws. Generally, the first code sets out what you must do while the second code sets out what the manufacturers must do.

Its now universally understood that we are all required to wear a seat belt. But if a car doesn't have enough, or any, seatbelts the Revised Code of Washington states that it only applies to vehicles that meets the Safety Belt standards set in the Code of Federal Regulations. When it comes to children, the general rules require that all kids be properly secured in the car. For kids under age 8 or shorter than 4 feet 9 inches a car seat or booster seat must be used. All kids under age 13 must be in

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the back seat. However these laws have some exceptions such as child restraint rules not applying where the car isn't required to have seat belts.

An excellent article in the Bellingham Herald titled "Seat Belt, safety laws not enforced for classic cars" sets out requirements for seat belts and the exceptions under the Code of Federal Regulations. Even though there appears to be child restraint exceptions for vintage cars every owner of 'classics' must pay attention to the ambiguity of what he must do versus what the manufacturer must do. While adults appear exempt from using seatbelts in 'classics', I'm not so sure that the exemption equally applies to children.

<https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/traffic/article216061415.html>



### Lucas P100 Headlamp Covers

A quick look on ebay and you will understand how "dear" these headlamps are to a Full Classic owner. The lens alone (if you can find it) can cost several hundred dollars. A refurbished headlamp can set you back thousands.

The P100 headlamp is found on many British cars including Alvis, Astin Martin, Bentley, Jaguar, Lagonda, Rolls-Royce and others. The installations vary based on the size and shape of the car's fenders and radiator.

I recently made headlamp covers for our 1948 Jaguar Mark IV. I used heavy duty Sunbrella fabric and closed-cell foam padding for extra protection. While it might be possible to use a home sewing machine, the number of fabric layers was easier to handle on an industrial sewing machine. For those interested I am happy to share my pattern.

- Karen Hutchinson



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