

Date as postmark

Dear Enquirer,

Replacing Child Car Seats that have been in an Accident

RoSPA advises that a child car seat that was in a car at the time the car was involved in an accident should be replaced, even if there is no visible damage to the child car seat. It is possible that it has been weakened to such an extent that it will not provide the same level of protection in another accident.

It is very difficult to judge how severe an impact needs to be to damage a child car seat. It may not be necessary to replace the seat if:

- it was a very low speed impact
- there was no, or very little, external damage to the car
- there was no child in the child seat when the impact occurred.

Some manufacturers give advice about the circumstances in which a child seat should be replaced.

However, the only reliable way to test whether a child car seat is still capable of providing the protection it is designed to provide would be to conduct crash tests on the seat, which would themselves destroy the seat.

If in any doubt, it is better to be safe than sorry – replace the child car seat.

RoSPA believes that insurance companies should regard the replacement cost as a legitimate accident cost and fund any necessary replacement, just as they would fund repairs to the vehicle's bodywork, for example.

The seat belts and seat belt attachments, especially if they were in use at the time of the impact, should also be carefully checked to ensure that they have not been damaged, and any necessary replacement or repair costs included in any insurance claim.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Clinton
Head of Road Safety