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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 that has been involved in an accident should be replaced, even if there is no visible damage. It is possible that the child seat 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 child 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.

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

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

If in any doubt, it is better to be safe than sorry – replace the child 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 ones that were in use at the time of the impact, should also be carefully checked to ensure that they have not been damaged. Include the replacement or repair cost in any insurance claim.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Clinton
Head of Road Safety



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