

LANCASTER GENERAL HEALTH Counterfeit and Illegal/Non-Compliant Car Seats: Risks and Identifying Tips

Counterfeit or Illegal Car Seats

Counterfeit car seats are “**fake**” (i.e., “knock-off”) car seats. They are made with cheaper materials and non-federally-regulated designs. Buyers think they are getting a good deal for an otherwise expensive seat.

What are the risks of a Counterfeit or Illegal Car Seat?

These car seats may be tested and approved in other countries, but do not meet United States (US) safety standards*.

This makes seats potentially dangerous for children.

*Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 (FMVSS 213) crash testing guidelines and approval by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

How do I know if a Car Seat is Counterfeit or Non-Compliant?

If you notice any of the following you should do additional research to see if the car seat is safe and can legally be used in the U.S.:

- Unrecognized manufacturer name
- Non-U.S. physical address
- Non-U.S. telephone number
- Foreign languages on the labels that **do not** include English
- Incorrect grammar, spelling or sentence structure
- Foreign compliance labels
- Missing required U.S. information on labels and instruction manuals



Examples of Appropriate Manufacturer Labels to look for:



Air Bag Warning Label



Model Name/Number & Manufacture Date



Basic Car Seat Use Label

Make sure your car seat is safe.

1. Register your seat with the manufacturer to receive important recall updates.

You can register your car seat(s):

- Online at the car seat manufacturer's website using the model number and manufacture date found on a sticker on the car seat.
 - OR Online at <https://nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats#registration>.
 - OR by filling out the registration card that came with the car seat. The registration card has the car seat's information. Mail the card; no postage required.
2. Have your car seat(s) checked by a certified child passenger safety technician (CPST)
- Car seats are complicated, and most are installed in vehicles **incorrectly**. This **increases** the chances of a severe injury or fatality during a collision.
 - There are a number of local places who have CPSTs on staff to check your car seat. CPSTs can check both the child's fit in the seat **and** the seat's installation in the vehicle.
 - Contact Safe Kids Lancaster County for a location that is convenient to you.
 - Visit: <https://www.pennmedicine.org/supporting-our-communities/healthy-living-environments/safe-kids>
 - Call: 717-544-3807
 - Email: Lindsay.Pringle@pennmedicine.upenn.edu (Safe Kids Lancaster County Coordinator)
3. Have questions about whether a car seat is genuine? Contact the seat's manufacturer directly. Car seat manufacturers can be contacted through Customer Service by phone or through their website.



Sources

Manufacturer's Alliance for Child Passenger Safety. "How to Determine That a Child Restraint System Can be Used Legally in the U.S."

PA Traffic Injury Prevention Project. "Counterfeit / Non-Compliant Car Seats."

