

## **POLICY FOR THE USAGE OF VEHICLE HARNESSSES**

Our specialised range of vehicle harnesses, are designed to aid both children and adults with challenging behaviour and postural support requirements during transit in both cars and minibuses. The aim of our vehicle harnesses is to enhance the passenger's quality of life by allowing them to be safely transported to their destination. This allows the passenger to continue to enjoy day to day activities such as going to school, as well as day trips out to locations a little further afield!

Our harnesses reduce the risk of injury which may be incurred during transit, especially when dealing with volatile individuals and passengers whom have no awareness of danger. The harness benefits not only the passenger, but also the driver / escort and members of the public, whom may be using the road or surrounding footpaths at the time of transport.

Social interaction is vital to many special needs individuals for continual development and is also important to their parents / carers as a means of fun, quality time spent with the individual, but also for the carer to receive support from others. Without access to an aid to safely transport the individual to a set location i.e. school/ the local park / day trip, individuals may be excluded from these activities and many parents /carers would become reliant on others for transport and in some cases home bound – this would be detrimental to the individual and the parent/ carer.

If the use of a harness from our range is suggested for an individual, we would recommend that you perform your own risk assessment. Firstly to determine if a harness is needed and secondly to determine which type in our range would be most beneficial to the individual concerned.

We are happy to give advice over the phone if help is required when selecting a harness.

The harness selection flow chart is available for download from our website and is a helpful tool to use when selecting a harness for a potential client.

**NB: Schools should check with their local councils / governing bodies to see if there are any set policies / risk assessments already in place that they need to adhere to in relation to the use of vehicle harnesses.**

**Permission should be obtained from the legal parent or guardian of children prior to use.**

**In some instances where the child is under social services, a best interest meeting may be required prior to permission being given.**

- The vehicle harness should be selected carefully to meet the needs of the passenger. We can offer a 14 day trial, sale or return policy on any of the vehicle harnesses in our range for customers within the UK.
- Please ensure you meet the UK legal requirements when transporting children using child / booster seats, as disabled children are not exempt from these regulations, unless they have an exemption certificate from their G.P.  
**ROSPA have a helpful guide for which type of seat should be used. This can be accessed on our website.**
- Our harnesses are not suitable for use with rear / forward facing child seats with an integral harness. They may be used with high backed booster seats with height adjustable head rests or booster cushions if required.
- Harnesses for passengers with gastric feeding tubes, urinary / colostomy bags etc should be considered carefully to ensure the harness will not interfere with the attachment site.
- Harness selection for passengers with spinal problems should be carefully considered and then referred to the passengers G.P for approval prior to use.
- We strongly recommend that a harness complete with a groin strap is used for passengers whom submarine down in their seats.

- Where possible it is strongly advisable that passengers have their own individual harnesses. This helps to prevent cross contamination and the spread of infectious diseases. Individual harnesses for passengers will also make it easier for carers as they do not need to alter the lengths of the straps for each journey.
- We recommend that epileptic passengers use a quick release buckle where possible, to allow quick release during a seizure. This is not possible in some cases due to extreme challenging behaviour.
- Ensure the care & maintenance, fitting instructions and buckle information sheets are read through carefully prior to use of the harness. All staff / parents / carers etc whom will be fitting the harness or travelling with the passenger should familiarise themselves with this literature. Companies should ensure that staff members are fully aware that the Crelling harness is **not** a safety harness and should be used in conjunction with the vehicle safety belt at all times unless a medical exemption certificate is held by the passenger.
- We recommend contacting your vehicle insurance company and informing them that you are using a disabled person's aid. Some insurance companies will cover the replacement cost of the harness if you are involved in a road traffic accident.
- We strongly recommend that passengers with challenging behaviour are not transported in the front passenger seat of the vehicle, as they may interfere with the handbrake or steering wheel, even whilst wearing a harness.
- All staff/ carers should be shown how to unfasten the steel safety buckles prior to the passenger being placed into the harness.
- The model 13 harness can be used for postural support on the front passenger seat in a private vehicle. This harness should not be used for challenging behaviour in a five seat vehicle.
- Harnesses should be fitted to the vehicle in accordance with the fitting instructions for the specific model purchased. These should be supplied with the harness. **Fitting instructions for all current harnesses are available for download from our website. For older harness instructions please contact us directly.**
- All harness packaging including the elastic bands should be removed from the vehicle once the harness has been fitted, as these could potentially become a choking hazard in cases of challenging behaviour.
- The harness should be the appropriate size for the individual and be fitted correctly ensuring it is a snug fit, but not too tight as to cause discomfort /injury.  
**The pinch test on the webbing can be adopted to ensure the harness is not too loose.**
- Comfort sleeves provided with the harnesses should be placed on the shoulder and groin straps on all vehicle harnesses to prevent chaffing from the adjuster buckles.  
**Some clients require additional padding; extra comfort sleeves can be purchased individually if required.**
- The vehicle safety belt should be positioned over the top of the Crelling harness being used.  
**Many customers use a buckle guard over the vehicle safety belt mechanism in cases of challenging behaviour to prevent the passenger releasing themselves.**
- Always ensure that other special needs passengers travelling within the same vehicle are suitably positioned/ restrained. Other special needs passengers should be positioned in the vehicle so they cannot interfere or cause injury to the harness wearer at any time, as this individual would be unable to safely move out of the way.
- Passengers wearing a harness should never be left alone in the vehicle and should be under the constant supervision of a responsible adult.
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- Regular checks should be made to ensure the passengers requirements have not changed and the harness being used is still the most suitable harness for the individual. **When checking to ensure that client's requirements have not changed, please also consider checking for weight changes, as this may affect how secure / comfortable the harness is for the passenger.**
- The harness should be checked regularly for damage to both components and webbing. If damage or fraying occurs, the harness should not be used and should be replaced immediately.
- Many special needs individuals have lowered immune systems. Good hygiene protocols can help lower the risk to these individuals. We recommend that the harnesses should be checked routinely to ensure they are adequately clean. **Copies of our washing instructions can be obtained on our website or by email.**
- If the vehicle is involved in a road traffic accident and the harness was in use at the time of collision, we would recommend immediate replacement.
- We strongly recommend that a safety knife webbing cutter is kept on board the vehicle, where harnesses with steel safety buckles are in use.  
This is not a mandatory rule, but is advisable so passengers can be removed quickly from the harness in the event of an accident.

Many road users whom do not use special needs harnesses insist on carrying a safety knife webbing cutter onboard their vehicles, so they can cut through the actual vehicle safety belt in an emergency. If the safety knife webbing cutter is used, it should be replaced with a new one.

**Safety knife webbing cutters can be purchased from us if required. If you would like a copy of our policy for usage of safety knives, please contact us and request one.**

- For passengers whom perspire excessively (especially during summer months) it is recommended that frequent checks are made to ensure the passenger is not becoming overheated when wearing the harness. Regular checks should be made to ensure that perspiration is not causing unnecessary chaffing from the harness against the passengers skin. If overheating / chaffing occurs, actions must be put in to place to prevent this.  
**Some clients have used cotton fabric and secured this around the pvc back pad and chest pad of the harness with self adhesive Velcro.**
- Care is advised during hot summer months as the metal part of the buckles may become hot if left in direct sunlight, whilst in the vehicle. Please check that buckles are not too hot prior to putting them against the passenger.
- All our products are fully guaranteed for 12 months from the date the goods are supplied. If the product you have purchased develops a material or manufacturing fault within 12 months of purchase, and the fault has not been the result of abuse, misuse or negligence, incorrect fitting or normal wear and tear, please contact us and we will arrange to repair or replace the harness.
- Any alterations made to the harness by a third party will invalidate the 12 month guarantee and will not be covered under our insurance for any injuries sustained.
- All of our harnesses have been on the market for between 30 – 40 years and over the test of time have proven successful with our clients requirements. We do not make bespoke harnesses. We do however offer simple modifications where necessary, which do not interfere with the general design of the harness. i.e change of buckles / lengthening of straps/ additional padding etc.

- We reserve the right to review, modify and change our harnesses at any time. Alterations to any harnesses will be at the sole discretion of the company's directors.
- Although there is not a set maximum consecutive time period for a harness to be in use. We would advise that during long journeys that the client is checked regularly and given a rest period from being in the harness, where possible every couple of hours.
- **If there is any doubt as to the suitability or fitting of a harness, discontinue use until further professional guidance has been sought.**