

IS YOUR BABY'S CAR SEAT REAL?

How to spot a counterfeit infant car seat before you buy

Counterfeit car seats sold through online marketplaces look like the real thing, but they skip the safety features that protect your baby in a crash. Some are even labeled for a doll. Here's how to tell the difference.



REAL VS. FAKE

A safe, approved seat:

- Feels sturdy and heavy, with metal reinforcement
- Lists clear height and weight limits
- Has a five-point harness and a chest clip
- Has a sewn-in manufacturer's fabric tag
- Has the required federal safety-standards label
- Comes with a mail-in registration card pre-printed with the maker's info
- Has thick, durable straps
- Meets U.S. (NHTSA) safety standards

A counterfeit seat often:

- Is suspiciously lightweight, with no metal support
- Is missing the chest clip or the harness
- Has no listed height or weight limits
- Has no sewn-in manufacturer tag
- Is missing the required federal-standards label
- Has no registration or recall card
- Has thin, flimsy straps
- May even be labeled for a doll, not a child



Scan for the full story.

Reporting by

Charlottesville Family
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WHERE TO BUY:

Buy from reputable retailers like major national stores (Walmart, Target). Verify any brand or model on the NHTSA website (nhtsa.gov). If a deal seems too good to be true, skip it.

GET IT CHECKED:

Have a certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician inspect and install your seat before your baby arrives.

IF YOU THINK YOU ALREADY HAVE ONE:

Stop using it right away — even for one trip.

Don't resell, donate, or hand it down. Cut the straps and dispose of it.

Report it to NHTSA (nhtsa.gov) and the seller, then replace it with a seat that meets federal standards.

LOCAL RESOURCES



Get Your Car Seat Inspected: Where to find a child passenger safety (CPS) technician near you

Nationally: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats#installation-help-inspection>

Statewide, or request a remote check: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/child-passenger-safety/safety-seat-checks/>

Free Car Seats: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/child-passenger-safety/low-income-safety-seat-program/>

Call **804-401-7970** and ask for more information on the safety seat program

Need help with a car seat installation?

Schedule your child safety seat inspection by calling **434-531-6614**,
by e-mailing carseats@albemarle.org, or by submitting a request online.