

New Release Heatstroke and Kids in Cars

Children should never be left alone in vehicles which can heat up to deadly temperatures in minutes and quickly kill a child. Last year, 30 children in the US died from heatstroke in hot cars - including a baby in New York State. These deaths are even more tragic because they are preventable.

(Name and title) of the (local health agency name) said, “Kids and hot cars are a deadly combination. In just 10 minutes, a car’s temperature can rise by 10 degrees, and continues to climb and stay hot. That means on a 90-degree day, the temperature inside a car can quickly surpass 107 degrees – which is the internal body temperature at which children die from heatstroke. Adding to this dangerous situation is that children get overheated up to five times more quickly than adults,” (he/she) said.

“More than half of the heatstroke deaths in cars are children less than two years old. In fact, not counting crashes, heatstroke is the leading cause of motor vehicle deaths for children 14 and younger.”

(Name of official) urges everyone to follow simple preventive tips to reduce the number of children who die in hot cars because they are accidentally forgotten by parents and caregivers (53%); who get into cars to play and then become trapped inside (29%) and who are left in the car by an adult who was running errands, visiting or attending to other business and could not or did not want to take the child with them (18%).”

- **Use reminders.** Keep a toy or large, stuffed animal in your child’s car seat. When you buckle in your child, move the animal/toy to the front seat. It will remind you that a child is in the car seat. Put your briefcase, cell phone or diaper bag in the backseat so you need to open the back door to get it and see that your child is waiting for you. Ask your child-care provider to call you if your child doesn’t show up as expected, especially if there is a change of routine. Set the alarm on your phone as a reminder for drop off and pick up times. This is important if your routine changes, or you are tired or overwhelmed. Put a “sticky” note where you will see it -- on your dash or another spot. Remind yourself where your children are and when to pick up or drop them off.

- **Look before you lock.** Always check the backseat and trunk or cargo area. Keep your keys and remote-access devices out of a child's reach. Don't let kids play with them. Teach kids to never play in or around cars. They can become trapped inside and die from heatstroke.
- **Never leave a child alone in a car.** There is no safe amount of time or any reason to leave a child behind. Cars heat up fast and stay hot. Even on a cooler or cloudy day, a child is at risk for heatstroke. Rolling down windows or parking in the shade will not safely cool down the car. A car can still reach deadly temperatures when it's only in the 60s. Always take kids with you. Use a "drive thru" so you don't need to leave the car. And pay for gas at the pump. If you see a child in a hot car, call 9-1-1 right away and follow instructions. Emergency personnel are trained to respond.

To learn more on hyperthermia and children in cars, visit the National Highway Traffic Administration website

<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/InandAroundtheCar/heatstroke.htm>.