

Never leave your child alone in a car.

Talking Points

The Issue

- Heatstroke, also known as hyperthermia, is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths for children.
- It occurs when the body isn't able to cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels.
- Young children are particularly at risk as their bodies heat up three to five times faster than an adult's.
- When a child's internal temperature gets to 104 degrees, major organs begin to shut down. And when that child's temperature reaches 107 degrees, the child can die.
- A car can heat up 19 degrees in 10 minutes. And cracking a window doesn't help.
- Symptoms can quickly progress from flushed, dry skin and vomiting to seizures, organ failure and death.

Key Stats

- Since 1998, more than 636 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when unattended in a vehicle.
 - 53% - child "forgotten" by caregiver
 - 29% - child playing in unattended vehicle
 - 17% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult
- In 2013, 44 children died from heatstroke. In 2014, 30 children died, the second lowest total of heatstroke deaths since 1998.
- Heatstroke deaths have been recorded in 11 months of the year in nearly all 50 states.
- There are a staggering number of near misses – children who were rescued before a fatality. Palm Beach County reported more than 500 near misses in one year alone.

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Top Safety Tips

- Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this preventable tragedy by remembering to **ACT**.
 - **A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not in it so kids don't get in on their own.
 - **C:** Create reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you're not following your normal routine.
 - **T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

Program Partners

- Safe Kids supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) heatstroke education campaign and the increased national coordination on the issue.
- With the support of the GM Foundation, Safe Kids and its network of 500 coalitions across the nation, including police and fire departments, hospitals and doctors, government agencies, childcare centers and businesses, are helping to educate parents and caregivers about the dangers of leaving children alone in a car.

Who Is Affected?

- These types of tragedies can happen to anyone, and most of the cases are to loving, caring parents.
- It's easy to become distracted when you are a new parent and are sleep-deprived or when your routine is disrupted.
- Data has shown that heatstroke tragedies happen more often when the daily routine is changed.