

MCLB ALBANY SAFETYGRAM



NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Children Left in Cars and Heatstroke

While the number of fatalities of children due to heatstroke in vehicles is not fully known, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and other safety advocates and academic institutions have recognized the safety threat heatstroke poses for young children left in vehicles. The federal government, automakers, car seat manufacturers, health and safety advocates, consumer groups, and others are working together to tackle this important safety issue.

KEY POINTS and STATISTICS

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says heatstroke in vehicles is the leading cause of all non-crash-related fatalities involving children 14 and younger, representing 61 percent of total non-crash fatalities in this age group.

- SafeKids.org estimates more than 520 children have died as a result of heatstroke since 1998, an average of 38 per year, or about one every 10 days.
- At least 33 children in the United States lost their lives after being left in unattended motor vehicles in 2011, and an unknown number of others were moderately to severely injured.

Children's bodies overheat easily, and infants and children under 3 years old are at the greatest risk for heatstroke.

- KidsandCars.org states, that 87 percent of children who died from vehicular heatstroke are age 3 and younger.
- A child's body absorbs more heat on a hot day than an adult.
- High body temperatures can cause a heatstroke or even death.
- Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104 degrees and the thermoregulatory system is overwhelmed. A core temperature of about 107 degrees is lethal.

Symptoms of heatstroke:

- ***red, hot, and moist or dry skin • no sweating • a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse***
- ***a throbbing headache • dizziness • nausea • confusion • being grouchy or acting strangely***

Safety tips to prevent vehicular heatstroke:

- Don't let children play in an unattended vehicle;
- Check the vehicle - front and back - before locking the door and walking away;
- Take steps to remember not to leave a child in a vehicle, such as: Write yourself a note; place something in the back seat you need; keep an object in the seat, such as a stuffed toy;
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even if the windows are partly open or the air conditioning is on.

For more information about Child Passenger Safety click on this website:

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/safety/hyperthermia>



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