

Keeping Children Safe In and Around Cars



Today's vehicles are equipped with many safety features designed to protect children and families. Even with new safety features, six common dangers have been identified for children who are playing near vehicles. Even the most careful parents can overlook these dangers. Always supervise children when they are in and around vehicles. Review the following tips to learn how to limit a child's risk. Talk to children and teach them how to avoid these dangerous situations.

Heatstroke: Children die each year from heatstroke after entering a vehicle unnoticed or being left alone in a vehicle. Heatstroke can occur at any time of the year. Even in cooler temperatures, the vehicle can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. The inside temperature of a vehicle can rise almost 20° Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes.

Always:

Check the back seats of the vehicle before you lock it and walk away. Lock the vehicle and keep the keys out of reach. Take action if you see a child alone in a car:

◆ **If the child is not responsive or in distress, immediately:**

- ◆ Call 911.
- ◆ Get the child out of the car.
- ◆ Spray the child with cool water (not an ice bath).

◆ **If the child is responsive:**

- ◆ Stay with the child until help arrives.
- ◆ Have someone else search for the driver or ask the facility to page them.



Trunk Entrapment: Children are naturally curious and love to explore their surroundings. Unsupervised children may climb into the vehicle trunk and become trapped. Children being entrapped in vehicle trunks can suffer heatstroke, asphyxiation and death. To avoid entrapment, heed the following safety and prevention tips.

Always:

- ◆ Check the trunk immediately if a child is missing.
- ◆ Lock the car doors and trunk. Place keys and remote entry devices out of a child's reach.
- ◆ Keep the rear fold-down seats upright and locked to keep children from climbing into the trunk from inside the car.



Teach children that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for playing.

Seat Belt Entanglement: A seated child is within reach of a seat belt and may become entangled if the seat belt is pulled all the way out and becomes wrapped around the head, neck, or waist. Seat belt entanglement can happen in the blink of an eye. Never leave your children alone in or around a vehicle for any reason.

If a child has an unused seat belt within reach:

- ◆ Buckle the unused seat belt,
- ◆ Pull it all the way out then feed the excess webbing back into the retractor.



Teach children that seat belts are not toys.

Power Windows: Children can hurt themselves with power windows. Children can be injured if a window closes on their finger, wrist, hand, or neck. Newer vehicles have child safety settings, "pull to close" switches, or power windows that reverse when it detects an object is in the path of the closing window or sunroof.

Never:

- ◆ Leave children alone in the vehicle
- ◆ Leave the keys in the ignition or in the "on" or "accessory" position when you exit the vehicle.

Always:

- ◆ Properly secure children in an appropriate car seat.
- ◆ Activate the power window lock switch so children cannot play with the windows.

Teach children to not play with window switches or climb on vehicle door armrests.



Back Over: A back over incident typically occurs when a car coming out of a driveway or parking space backs over a child. Many cars are equipped with rearview video cameras or warning sounds, but do not rely on these devices to detect what is behind the vehicle. Children are unpredictable.

Always:

- ◆ Walk around the vehicle to check for children before backing up. Actively check mirrors while backing up slowly
- ◆ Roll down a window to hear what is happening outside of the car.

Teach children to:

- ◆ Play away from cars and to keep toys and bikes out of the driveway.
- ◆ Move away from a vehicle when a driver gets into a car or the car is started.
- ◆ Stand to the side of the driveway or sidewalk to be easily seen as a vehicle is backing out of a driveway or parking space.



Vehicle Rollaway: Leaving a child unattended in a vehicle with the keys in the ignition is never safe. Unattended children can accidentally cause the vehicle to roll—or even drive—away, especially if the engine is running. Vehicles equipped with a keyless ignition or push-button start feature can rollaway when the vehicle has been turned off and not shifted into park.

- ◆ Always ensure the vehicle is securely in the "Park" position before shutting the vehicle off and exiting.
- ◆ Never leave keys in the car.

Keep vehicle locked when unattended and supervise children carefully when in and around vehicles.



Pedestrian Safety for Children



Safe Walking

1 Be a Good Role Model: Children learn by watching parents and adults. Always follow the rules of the road and obey traffic signs and signals. Walk with children and practice safe pedestrian behaviors. Following the rules of the road makes pedestrians more predictable and more likely to be seen by drivers.



2 Cross the Street Safely: Teach children to:

- ♦ Stop at the curb or edge of the road,
- ♦ Look Left - Look Right - Look Left Again,
- ♦ Wait until no traffic is coming to start crossing the street,
- ♦ Keep looking and listening for traffic as you cross the street.

Remember to look for cars that are turning when crossing a corner or intersection.



3 Supervise Young Children: Children younger than 10 years of age need supervision to help them safely walk near driveways, parked cars and when crossing the street. Children who know all the road safety rules may not remember to follow them.

Hold a child's hand when near cars and model safe pedestrian behavior. Always **STOP**:

- ♦ At a driveway and look for cars,
- ♦ At the curb and wait until it is safe to cross.

4 Streets are for Vehicles - Walk on the Sidewalk: Make it a rule not to play in the street. Stay on the sidewalk and avoid walking on the road. If you must walk on a road that does not have sidewalks, always walk facing traffic, as far away from traffic as possible.

5 Cross at the Corner or Intersection: Use the crosswalk, when available, and follow all traffic signs and signals. Look for traffic in all directions, including over your shoulder to look for vehicles that are turning.



6 Crossing At Locations Away From a Corner or Intersection When a crosswalk or intersection is not available, cross the street in a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic.

- ♦ Walk to the edge of any parked cars, bushes, or other objects that block the view of traffic and **Stop to Look for Traffic**.
- ♦ **Look Left - Look Right - Look Left Again** and wait for a gap in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely.
- ♦ Continue watching for traffic as you cross.



7 See And Be Seen: Children may assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. Teach children to make eye contact with drivers before stepping into the road to cross the street.

8 Driveways and Parking Lots: Encourage children to look for cars entering or exiting driveways and vehicles backing up in parking lots.

- ♦ Teach children the signs that a car is running and to look for the lights on a car that is backing up.
- ♦ Never back out of a driveway without first checking around the vehicle for small children. Look for children who may be in or near the driveway. Find safe places for children to play, away from the driveway.

9 Walk - Do Not Run Across the Street: Teach children to always **STOP** and look for traffic before entering the street. Children should enter the street when there is a gap that allows them to walk across the street. Explain to children how hard it is for a vehicle to stop quickly.

10 Be Safe and Be Seen: Weather conditions and time of day may make it more difficult to be seen when walking. Wear brightly colored clothing and reflective gear to be more visible to drivers.

When walking in low visibility conditions, such as rain, snow, dusk or dawn, use a flashlight to help a driver see you walking.

