

Never Leave Your Child Alone in a Car



Over the past few months, **thirteen children have died** while alone in a vehicle, and summer hasn't even officially begun. Did you know that a child's body heats up 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's? It only takes a few short minutes before a child can become dangerously overheated.

Every year, more than 30 children die because they are alone in a car. In just 10 minutes a car's temperature can increase by 19 degrees – and it continues to rise. There is no evidence that cracking the windows helps prevent the temperature in vehicle interiors from reaching dangerous levels. In fact, sunlight coming through car windows makes the car work like an oven.

Follow these tips to help prevent child injuries.

- ◆ Dial 911 immediately if you see an unattended child in a car. EMS professionals are trained to determine if a child is in trouble.
- ◆ Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- ◆ Place a cell phone, PDA, purse, briefcase, gym bag or whatever is to be carried from the car on the floor in front of a child in a backseat. This triggers adults to see children when they open the rear door and reach for their belongings.
- ◆ Set your cell phone or Blackberry reminder to be sure you dropped your child off at day care.
- ◆ Set your computer calendar program, such as Outlook, to ask, "Did you drop off at daycare today?"
- ◆ Have a plan that if your child is late for daycare that you will be called within a few minutes. Be especially careful if you change your routine for dropping off little kids at day care.
- ◆ Teach children not to play in any vehicle.
- ◆ Lock all vehicle doors and trunk after everyone has exited the vehicle – especially at home. Keep keys out of children's reach. Cars are not playgrounds or babysitters.
- ◆ Check vehicles and trunks **FIRST** if a child goes missing.



Need to Learn More? TIPP can help... If you would like more information or would like to request a training, please contact the Pennsylvania Traffic Injury Prevention Project at 1-800-CAR-BELT or visit the website at www.pakidstravelsafe.org.

Study of Excessive Temperatures in Enclosed Vehicles

A study found that on sunny days, even when the ambient (outside) temperature is mild or relatively cool, there is a rapid and significant heating of the interior of vehicles. On days when the ambient temperature is 72°F, the internal vehicle temperature can reach 117°F within 60 minutes, with 80% of the temperature rise occurring in the first 30 minutes. On days when ambient temperatures exceeded 86°F, the internal temperatures of the vehicle can quickly reach 134 to 154°F. In general, after 60 minutes, one can expect a 40°F increase in internal temperatures for ambient temperatures spanning 72 to 96°F, putting children at significant risk. It was also determined that cracking open windows is not effective in decreasing either the rate of heat rise or the maximum temperature attained.

MEDICAL

- ◆ Heatstroke occurs when a person's temperature exceeds 104 degrees F
- ◆ Symptoms include : dizziness, disorientation, agitation, confusion, sluggishness, seizure, hot dry skin that is flushed but not sweaty, loss of consciousness, rapid heart beat, hallucinations
- A core body temperature of 107 degrees F is considered lethal as cells are damaged and internal organs shut down
- Children's thermoregulatory systems are not as efficient as an adult's and their body temperatures warm at a rate 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's.

