

HELPFUL TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

Never Leave Children Unattended In or Around Vehicles... NOT EVEN FOR A MINUTE

Each year, hundreds of children are left unattended in motor vehicles. About 75 percent of child deaths in parked cars are due to adults leaving children unattended, either intentionally or unintentionally. Many caring and responsible adults are not aware or underestimate the risks involved when leaving their child alone in a vehicle. These dangers include: heatstroke or *hyperthermia*, body heat loss or *hypothermia*, setting a vehicle in motion, getting trapped in a car or trunk, and abduction.

The following are some tips to keep children safe from serious injury or death in or around a parked vehicle.

INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES WHILE IN OR AROUND A VEHICLE

- Never leave a child in an unattended vehicle in the warm or cold weather, not even with the windows slightly open or down, due to the risk of *hyperthermia* (heatstroke) or *hypothermia* (body heat loss).
 - Heatstroke can occur when the internal body organs or body core temperature reaches 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Heatstroke symptoms may include: confusion, combativeness, faintness, and bizarre behavior. High body temperature can cause irreversible brain damage.
 - The temperature in an enclosed motor vehicle rises approximately 19 degrees Fahrenheit in minutes, 34 degrees in half an hour, and 43 degrees in one hour. A body temperature of 107 degrees Fahrenheit is considered deadly.
 - Mild to severe *hypothermia* can occur when the body temperature falls between 98.6 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms in infants may include bright-red cold skin and low energy; symptoms in older children may include shivering, confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness, or irrational behavior.
- If a child is unintentionally locked inside a vehicle, get him/her out as quickly as possible. If the child appears to be suffering from any of the more serious symptoms listed above, call 911 immediately.
- When outside of your car, keep your vehicle locked at all times and never leave keys within the reach of children.
- Teach children not to play in or around vehicles and to alert an adult when a friend is playing in a vehicle without supervision. Make sure children understand the dangers of trunk entrapment (suffocation, heatstroke, and *hypothermia*).
- Before backing up a motor vehicle, walk around it to make sure there are no children or animals behind the wheels or under the vehicle. It is also important to check your rearview and side mirrors when backing up, especially when children are playing outside.
- Place a stuffed toy in your child's car seat when not in use, and move the toy to the front passenger seat when your child is in his/her car seat as a reminder that your child is in the vehicle.
- When driving with a child in a vehicle, use drive-through services whenever possible.

