



## PREVENTING CHILD PASSENGER HEATSTROKE

### FACTS

- Heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash vehicle fatalities for children 14 and younger according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)©.
- Heat stroke occurs when the body temperature exceeds 104°F. A body temperature of 107°F is considered fatal.
- Children are at a higher risk than adults of dying from heatstroke in a hot vehicle due to children overheating 3 to 5 times faster than adults. A factor which increases the risk is when they are too young to communicate.
- The inside of a vehicle heats up extremely quickly. Even with windows cracked the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees within minutes.
- Cracking windows does not help slow the heating process, nor does it decrease the maximum temperature in vehicles.
- 80% of the rise in temperature happens in the first 10 minutes.
- Children have died from heatstroke in cars with outside temperatures as low as 60 degrees.

### STATISTICS

- In 2018 and 2019, a record number of hot car deaths, the most in at least 25 years was 53 children each year.
- Total number of Child Fatalities in the U.S. since 1998 is 983.
- Circumstances of child heatstroke fatalities from 1998-2023:
  - 52.5% were forgotten in the vehicle.
  - 24.9% gained access by themselves and became trapped.
  - 20.9% were left intentionally.
  - 1.7% were unknown cases.

### RECOMMENDED SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Keep vehicles locked at all times, this includes when vehicles are parked in garages and driveways.
- Parents/guardians and employees should never leave cars unlocked.
  - This needs to be enforced when picking up or dropping off.
- Car keys and remote openers must be kept out of reach of all children.
- Never leave children alone, not even for a minute, in or around cars.
- If a child is noticed as missing, check the inside passenger compartments and trunks of all vehicles in the area very carefully, even if the vehicle appears to be locked. A child can lock the vehicle's doors after entering on their own but may not be able to unlock them.
- When going on field trips make a plan for each child's supervision.
  - All children need to be checked on and off the bus, and at the maximum in 15 minute intervals while at their destination.
  - Conduct a headcount at minimum; a written checklist is preferable as it will document that the count occurred.
- Carry a sign that states vehicle check complete for post trip inspections. The sign should remain in the front of the vehicle and posted in a rear window when arriving to destination. Vehicle checks should:
  1. Start at the rear
  2. Check in and under each seat
  3. Move or remove all objects to ensure that no one is concealed by them
  4. If possible have second employee repeat the check
  5. Move 'Vehicle Check Complete' sign to rear window

For further information, please refer to your state legislation regarding Children left Unattended in Vehicles.