

A kit makes trunks in older cars safer

Last reviewed: July 2010



Beginning in the 2002 model year, all cars began coming with a glow-in-the-dark release handle inside the trunk that allows people to escape from locked trunks. But many cars manufactured before that year still represent a risk.

Every year, some 10 to 20 people die trapped in a car trunk, estimates Janette Fennell, founder and president of Kids And Cars, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing injury and death to children in or around motor vehicles. While many victims are kids playing hide-and-seek, many more are adults put in trunks in the course of a crime, says Fennell.

Now that interior release handles are mandatory, most of these incidents now happen in older cars, which aren't equipped with release handles. Only a few models, such as the Ford Taurus, had the handles before they were required.

Some automakers offered kits to retrofit earlier-model vehicles with interior trunk handles, but those kits are no longer available.

To fill the gap, KidsAndCars.org (www.kidsandcars.org/online-store) sells a retrofit kit called the Quick-Out Emergency Trunk Release. Call for pricing and availability.

We tested the Quick-Out kit on a 1990 Mazda Miata and a 1989 Ford Mustang. The kit was easy to install using common tools. One of our smaller staff members locked in the trunk was able to free himself easily. The handle glows in the dark making it easy to find, and the force required to pull the trunk release was easy for an adult.

If you are buying a car made before 2002, check to see if it's equipped with an interior trunk-release handle. If not, we recommend installing the Quick-Out Emergency Trunk Release and teaching your family how to use it.

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/cars/car-safety/tips-and-advice/trunk-entrapment-406/overview/index.htm>

To purchase a Quick-Out Trunk Release Kit for only **\$9.99** visit KidsAndCars.org's online store at:

<http://KidsAndCars.org/online-store.html>