



Every Summer Kids Die in Hot Car Trunks



At least 20 children have died after becoming trapped in hot cars this year. (Image Source/Getty Images)

By [ELISABETH LEAMY](#) July 12, 2011

There are heat advisories in big chunks of the country this week thanks to triple digit temperatures a good time for a reminder that at least [20 children have already died after becoming trapped in hot cars](#) this year. Three of

those recent deaths were somewhere that can be completely preventable: the trunk of the car.

Oklahoma, last week. An 8-year-old boy is exploring the 1998 Chevy Cavalier his parents just bought, when he gets stuck in the trunk and dies in the heat.

"They don't know the dangers of it -- being in a closed vehicle," said Sondra Lockyer, the boy's aunt.

Indiana, last month. Two brothers climb into the trunk of their mom's 2000 Chevrolet Malibu and also die.

"I have a problem with that," said Janette Fennel of the advocacy group Kids and Cars.

Fennel feels ill every time she hears about a new case.

"I felt, why didn't I push harder? Why didn't I just absolutely not stop?" said Fennel.

Kids and Cars has repeatedly called on General Motors to recall its older vehicles and install trunk safety releases that allow people inside to escape.

Starting in 2002, all cars were required to have a glow-in-the-dark safety release inside the trunk. You just pull the latch, and the trunk opens.

Fennel says no one has ever died in the trunk of a newer vehicle that has a safety release.

"Those children, I feel very certain, would be alive today if there had been a trunk release in that vehicle."

GM makes more cars than any other company, so accidents are bound to happen in its vehicles. In a statement, GM put the responsibility back on parents, saying it has "worked...to alert parents and caregivers to the dangers of leaving children unattended in or around vehicles." We asked if GM plans to issue a recall, and the answer was 'No.'



2-Year-Old Dies in Georgia Day Care Van [Watch Video](#)

If your vehicle was built before 2002, chances are there is no easy way to escape from inside the trunk. But in this economy, we want to make our cars last. So here are some safety tips:

- Teach kids that cars are not toys and don't let them play in or around them.
- Keep your car locked, even when it's parked at home in your garage or driveway.
- Some cars have a switch in the trunk that allows you to turn off the remote function, so your trunk will only open with a key, which is much harder for small children to maneuver,
- Some people get an extra keyless remote and keep it in their trunk.
- You can buy a trunk safety release retrofit kit for \$10 from Kids and Cars. [Click here](#) for more information.

Leaving children in the passenger compartment of the car is another tragic occurrence every summer. Here's prevention advice offered by Safe Kids:

- If you see an unattended child in a car, dial 911 immediately.
- Never leave a baby unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- Place something that you will need at your next stop - for example, a purse, lunch, gym bag or briefcase - on the floor of the backseat where the child is sitting. This simple act could prevent you from accidentally forgetting your child if he or she is sleeping.
- Be especially careful if you change your routine for dropping off babies at child care. Have a plan that if your child is late for child care, you will be called within a few minutes.
- Watch children closely around vehicles, particularly when loading and unloading. Check to ensure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination. Do not overlook sleeping babies.

To read the statement by General Motors, [click here](#).

After the June deaths of two Indiana boys, General Motors provided the following statement to Good Morning America:

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Indiana boys' family and we are deeply saddened by their loss.

Keeping children safe in and around vehicles is a priority for General Motors. For more than 15 years, we have worked with Safe Kids Worldwide to provide vital child passenger safety information to parents and caregivers in communities across the country. One important part of these efforts is to alert parents and caregivers to the dangers of leaving children unattended in or around vehicles. Increasing awareness and education is critical since millions of vehicles of varying makes and models without trunk latches are still in the marketplace. Since 2001, interior trunk releases have been provided standard in all GM passenger vehicles with trunks.

As always, we encourage parents and caregivers to visit www.safekids.org for tips on how to help keep kids safe in the warm weather months and throughout the year."

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/ConsumerNews/summer-kids-die-hot-car-trunks/story?id=14049363>