

Emergency Trunk-Release Lever Saves Lives

By [Jennifer Geiger](#) | September 21, 2012



For the 2002 model year, all cars were required to feature a standard glow-in-the-dark trunk-release lever, which opens the compartment from the inside in the event of an emergency. Since the mandate, no children have died in the trunk of a car equipped with the lever, but accidental trunk entrapment in older cars has killed at least 22 children since 2002, according to safety watchdog and advocacy group Kids and Cars.

The group estimates that every year, 10 to 20 people, including kidnapped adults, die trapped in a car trunk. Older cars without the release handle make escape difficult. Trunk temperatures rise sharply, resulting in heat-related deaths.

Kids and Cars urges parents who own older cars to consider buying a [trunk-lever retrofit kit](#), sold for as low as \$9.99 at <http://www.kidsandcars.org/online-store.html>.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers the following prevention tips:

- Teach children that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for hide-and-seek.
- Always supervise your children carefully when in and around vehicles.
- Check the trunk right away if your child is missing.
- Lock your car doors and trunk and be sure keys and remote-entry devices are out of sight and reach of your kids.
- Keep the rear fold-down seats closed/locked to keep your children from climbing into the trunk from inside your car.

<http://blogs.cars.com/kickingtires/2012/09/emergency-trunk-release-lever-saves-lives.html>

Article also appeared in The Kansas City Star:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2012
WWW.KANSASCITY.COM
KANSAS CITY STAR.

DriveTime

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- By Jennifer Geiger, Cars.com