

# New law goes into effect to help save the lives of children trapped in hot cars

By [STEPHANIE BEECKEN](#) 6 News Reporter Posted: Jul 01, 2014 3:55 PM CDT



Authorities say the inside of a car can heat up and become deadly for a child in as little as 20 minutes. **According** to [KidsandCars.org](#), children have suffered heatstroke inside cars when the outside temperature was 60 degrees.

KNOXVILLE (WATE) - A new Tennessee law that went into effect Tuesday will allow anyone who witnesses a child locked inside a hot car to break out the window and get the child to safety.

To show just how fast your car can heat up we decided to track the heat ourselves. We placed a thermometer in the back seat of a car at 4:00 pm. Tuesday afternoon. When we put the thermometer in the car, it read 91 degrees.

After 90 minutes in the back seat, the temperature rose to 108 degrees.

Authorities say the inside of a car can heat up and become deadly for a child in as little as 20 minutes.

It's a parent's worst nightmare forgetting your child in the backseat. Kristie Cavaliero and her husband never imagined it could happen to them but it did one morning when they changed their routine.

"In May of 2011, we lost our one year old daughter Sophia Ray when her father forgot to drop her off at day care one morning," said Cavaliero.

Three hours had passed when they realized the mistake.

"It's literally a perpetual nightmare, because you live everyday knowing that one of your children is missing at the dinner table," said Cavaliero.

Cavaliero is now involved with [KidsandCars.org](#) a nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and death to children in or around cars. The organization is in support of Tennessee's new law allowing people to break into a car to rescue a trapped child.

"In the past people have been hesitant to take action when they do see a child left unattended in a car," said Cavaliero.

To be allowed to break into the car, the child must be in danger and the car must be locked. Law enforcement must also be notified. If a person rescues a trapped child, a note must be left on the car windshield. The person must stay with the child close to the car until emergency responders arrive.

Captain Nate Allen with the Knoxville Police Department says it's already illegal for children to be left alone in cars. He says a hot car can be deadly in less than 20 minutes.

"In less than an hour the temperature inside that car is 40 to 50 degrees hotter than the temperature outside," said Cavaliero.

According to [KidsandCars.org](#), children have suffered heatstroke inside cars when the outside temperature was 60 degrees.

Cavaliero is now sharing her story in hopes of raising awareness to save lives.

"Our promise to her is that we will spend up to our last breath if need be bring these numbers to zero," said Cavaliero.

KPD encourages parents to leave their cell phones in the back seat and put the diaper bag in the front seat. Captain Allen

says to take precautions so you never accidentally leave your child unattended in the car.

Kids and Cars members also recommend [setting up a plan](#) with your child care provider. They say you should always call if your child won't be there and if the child care provider hasn't received the call ask them to always call you to ask why the child is absent.

<http://www.wate.com/story/25919042/new-law-goes-into-effect-to-help-save-the-lives-of-children-trapped-in-hot-cars>