

Deaths of children in hot cars soar

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The summer is just warming up, but so far this year [15 children](#) have already died from heatstroke after being left alone in a hot car. That's more than double the number of deaths compared to the same time last year. The ages of the children range from two months to four years old and as the season progresses, there is concern that more of these accidental deaths will occur.

Since 1998, 574 children have died from hyperthermia after being left in a hot car. More than half of the deaths were young children under the age of two.

These hot-car tragedies often occur when there is a change in driver's routine, stress, or a sleeping baby in the back and a parent or caregiver forgets that a child is in the car. Some knowingly leave children "just for a minute" not realizing how quickly the temperature in a car can rise to dangerous levels. Even on a 70-degree day, the inside temperature of a car can exceed 120 degrees even with windows partially open.

Here are some tips to help avert a heartbreaking catastrophe and make sure no child is left behind in a vehicle.

- Simple rule: Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, not even for a minute. In addition to being dangerous, it is against the law in many states.
- Check the car to make sure that all occupants leave the vehicle or are carried out when unloading. If you lock the door with a key, rather than with a remote, it would force that one last look in the car before leaving it.
- Always lock your car and keep keys and remotes away from children.
- To serve as a reminder, keep a stuffed animal on the front passenger seat when carrying a child in the backseat.
- Place something in the backseat that you would need, such as a purse, briefcase or cell phone.
- Have a plan that your childcare provider will call you if your child does not show up.
- If you see a child alone in a car, especially if they seem hot, call 911 immediately to help get them out.

For additional information on keeping your children safe in and around motor vehicles, visit the [Kids and Cars](#) website and our special section on [kids and car safety](#). Also read: "[Hot cars: A deadly danger](#)."

Related: [Warning systems to detect children left in hot cars found unreliable, study finds](#)

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