

Quick facts on automatic window safety and a history of the power window.

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Photo Credit: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

DENVER- Fatalities from automatic car windows are rare; there have been 57 deaths since 1991, according to kidsandcars.org.

However, 2,000 injuries were reported from automatic car windows in 2012, and 1,000 of those injuries were children, according to the national Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The levers used to open and close power windows are to blame for some of those injuries. The types of switches used in older cars, called "rocker

switches" and "toggle switches," make it easier for a passenger to accidentally close a window.

Rocker switches are designed to pivot on a center hinge like a see-saw and toggle switches operate using small knobs that push back and forth to open and close. This being said, a child could accidentally put pressure on an old lever, which would quickly close the window.

The levers have been re-designed to make automatic windows safer. "Lever switches" are the newest design. Instead of pushing one way to close a window, the new levers require a passenger to pull the lever up to close the window. Research shows these windows cannot be closed unintentionally. The new levers have been required on all passenger vehicles since October 2010. For more information on the difference in power switches, [visit the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's website](#).

Some newer vehicles have new systems installed that automatically reverse when an object, like a child's arm, is in the path of a closing window. The NHTSA ruled in 2009 that automatic reversing systems are not required in car windows. A full list of safety features in a specific car should be listed in owner's manual. [Click here](#) for a comprehensive list of makes and models of cars and the safety features available.

Safety advocates also suggest buying a car with side-impact airbags, an interior trunk release and automatic door locks to protect children.

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