

How to keep from leaving a child in a hot car



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The average number of children dying of heat stroke per year since 1998 has been 38, according to KidsandCars.org. (Thinkstock)

WASHINGTON - Throughout a 16-day-period last month, seven children in the United States died after being left in a hot car. The sharp increase has [Kids and Cars organization](#) stepping up its efforts to ensure child safety.

KidsAndCars.org's Amber Rollins wants parents to make checking for children a routine before even locking car doors.

"We've seen cases of children dying from heat stroke in a vehicle on days as low as 60 degrees," says Rollins.

"A vehicle acts like a green house."

One suggestion from Rollins is to put something, like a purse, in the back seat as a reminder. Rollins adds that anyone who sees a child left in a car should call 911. However, Maryland and Virginia are among 31 states where leaving a child alone in a vehicle isn't illegal.

Here are some more tips from [kidsandcars.org](#).

- Never leave children alone in or around cars, not even for a minute.
- Put something you'll need (cellphone, handbag, employee ID or brief case) on the floor of the back seat.
- Make it a habit to always open the back door of your vehicle every time you reach your destination.
- Use a visual reminder. Put a large stuffed animal in the child's car seat when the child is not in the seat. Keep the stuffed animal in the front passenger seat when you have the child with you in the car.
- Always call your child's day care center or baby sitter when your child will not be there.
- Keep vehicles locked at all times. Always set your parking brake.
- Keep keys and/or remotes out of the reach of children.
- Make sure all children are out of the vehicle after it is parked.
- When a child is missing, check vehicles and car trunks immediately.
- Call 911 if you see a child alone in a vehicle.
- Be especially careful with children and cars when you are busy, your schedule changes and during crises and holidays.
- Use drive-thru services (restaurants, banks, pharmacies) when available.
- Use your debit or credit card to pay for gas at the pump.

WTOP's Hank Silverberg contributed to this report. Follow [@hsilverbergWTOP](#) and [@WTOP](#) on Twitter.

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