

Danger of leaving kids in cars

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It's any parent's nightmare - a vehicle is stolen with children inside. It may sound unlikely, but it can and does happen in the blink of an eye.

A running car left unattended is an open invitation to steal.

"All it's doing is giving these criminals the opportunity to jump in there and be gone before you know it," said Lt. Rich Whitford.

"There are so many scenarios where children are left in danger," said Whitford. "Just running into a store the child might be sleeping and might be buckled into a car seat and you think that you're only going to be a minute or two."

Several parents say they would not leave their kids in their car for any amount of time.

"Never, never, there are just too many things that can happen," said Marilyn Wilson. "You never plan on those things happening but just in case you don't want to be the one and the thought of something happening to my children because I made one of those rash decisions I wouldn't be good for the rest of my life so I made a choice a long time ago that I would never do that."

We went undercover, spending several days at convenience stores, post offices and gas stations to see how many parents really do refuse to take a chance of leaving their kids alone, even for just a minute. In the hours we watched, no one left their kids.

Police and child advocates say if you're in the situation, make the judgment simple. Turn your car off and don't leave your kids alone. In fact, in some cases, leaving children unattended in a car can lead to criminal charges.

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