

NEVER leave a child alone inside a vehicle... not even for a minute!

Children should NEVER be left alone inside a vehicle... not even for a minute! There are far too many devastating tragedies of children being seriously injured or killed from being left alone in or around a vehicle for “just a minute.” The worst thing any parent or caregiver can do is to say “this would never happen to me.”

We all understand the inconvenience of loading, unloading and reloading a child into a vehicle... it is exhausting! BUT...we must never put our own convenience above the safety of our precious children. Your quick run into the store can easily take much longer than you had originally planned. (long lines, picking up extra items, unexpected delays, loosing track of time)

Below are just a few reasons why children should never be left alone in or around a vehicle, not even for a minute:

1. **Within minutes a young child can begin to suffer the life-threatening symptoms of heat stroke.** The inside of a vehicle acts like a greenhouse trapping in heat causing the temperature inside to rise VERY quickly. Cracking the windows does NOT drastically reduce the temperature inside a vehicle. A child’s body temperature rises 3-5 times faster than an adult.
Somebody Help Me! (30sec PSA): <http://youtu.be/GQ6BC-oKHRA>
It only Takes a Second (30sec PSA): <http://youtu.be/T4wttLNSZiU>
Heat Stroke (30sec PSA): <http://youtu.be/kYGAJagq-Wg>
2. **Vehicles are stolen with children alone inside** quite frequently. This happens even in the safest neighborhoods and it only takes a few seconds for a thief to jump into your vehicle and take off with your child in tow. Most of the time, the thief doesn’t realize there is a child inside until they are already gone in the vehicle.
Car Theft (30sec PSA): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTa98jQfYTg&feature=relmfu>
3. **Power windows in vehicles have killed or injured thousands of children.** It takes just 22 pounds of force to suffocate or injure an infant while power windows can exert an upward force of 30-80 pounds of force. Children are curious; they push buttons without realizing the dangers of what can happen.
Power Windows (30sec PSA): <http://youtu.be/aNs97tJJFzI>
Bounce Back (30sec PSA): <http://youtu.be/vsSwV2se20k>
4. **Every year hundreds of children are hospitalized or even killed after accidentally setting a car into motion.** Most drivers think that their vehicle cannot be shifted into gear unless the vehicle is running and the driver has their foot on the brake. However, this is NOT the case. Vehicles can be knocked into gear while turned off and without the driver’s foot on the brake. Check your vehicle to see if it can be shifted into gear without your foot on the brake: <http://www.kidsandcars.org/userfiles/dangers/heat-stroke/btsi-testing-051211.pdf>
5. **A child can choke on something inside of the vehicle** and there is no adult there to help them and children are known for putting everything in their mouth.
6. Children have been **strangled by seat belts** in vehicles.

1/21/2016

7. **Vehicle fires** are started by children who have discovered matches or a lighter.
8. Children have been seriously injured from **falling out of a vehicle**.
9. **If a child gets out of a vehicle they face a whole new set of dangers.** Children are backed over and run over by slow forward moving vehicles in parking lots and driveways. Every year, thousands of children are killed or seriously injured because a driver backing up or moving slowly forward didn't see them.
10. **Abductions and kidnappings** are rare, but they DO happen.
11. Children as young as 3-4 years old have been known to “**take the car for a spin**” – even the most well behaved children are curious. They see Mom and Dad drive and they want to do it too.

Our hope is that every parent is educated about these frightening situations that happen every day. Think it can't happen to you or your child? Think again. These are NOT risks you want to take with your child.

To learn more about the many dangers children face when left alone in or around vehicles please visit KidsAndCars.org's website at: <http://www.KidsAndCars.org>.

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