

Children Left Unattended In or Around Vehicles	
Whereas 1	Whereas, Each year children are left unattended in and around vehicles that can lead to deadly consequences; and
Whereas 2	Whereas, These consequences include the dangers of abduction, heat stroke, strangulation, trunk entrapment, being backed over, and personal injuries to themselves or others by causing accidental and uncontrolled movement of the vehicle; and
Whereas 3	Whereas, Nationally, four children are killed in preventable non-traffic automobile incidents every week; therefore be it
Resolved 1	Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations advocate for and support legislation that prevents children from being injured or killed in non-traffic automobile accidents, including being left unattended in or around vehicles, and be it further
Resolved 2	Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations identify and promote educational programs for families, teachers, administrators, and community members on the dangers of children being left unattended in and around vehicles, and be it further
Resolved 3	Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations partner with national, state, and local child safety organizations to address the issue of non-traffic automobile related incidents involving our children and youth, and be it further
Resolved 4	Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations support efforts to improve or enhance automobile safety technology that would prevent non-traffic automobile related incidents.

Whereas, Each year children are left unattended in and around motor vehicles that can lead to deadly consequences.

Parked Cars Dangerous for Kids!

http://www.saferideneews.com/pdfs/Fact_sheets/E2_Parked_cars_07.pdf

A vehicle is not a playground or a babysitter!

Forgotten Kids

Tragedy can happen when a parent or other caregiver mistakenly leaves a baby or young child in the car. This can easily happen to stressed parents whose daily routine changes unexpectedly.

A vehicle can heat up rapidly, even with a window rolled down. A child can easily get heat stroke. This can cause brain damage or death in minutes.

Prevention tips

- Check to make sure that all children are out of the car after you park it.
- Put your briefcase or purse on the floor in the back seat on every trip. This will remind you to look in back before leaving your vehicle.
- Make sure your child care provider always calls you if your child is not dropped off as planned.
- Check your car and trunk right away if your child is missing.

Kids Left Alone in Cars (1, 2)

Never leave your child in a vehicle without an adult, even in his or her car seat. Even a brief stop could turn into a tragedy. These things do happen:

- Children can get dangerously overheated on a sunny day. This can happen even if they are left in the car for only a few minutes.
- A child playing with the driver's controls can start it rolling. Children learn how to make the car go by watching drivers.
- A child can be strangled if the window goes up while he or she is leaning out. This can happen easily in cars with windows that go up when the control switch is pressed down. (Check to see if your car's window switches are this kind.)
- Kids can get trapped in car trunks while playing.

Prevention tips

- Always take your child with you when you leave the car. Do not be tempted to leave your children alone when you go into a store for "just a minute."
- Keep doors locked in parked cars. Put keys out of reach.
- Keep rear fold-down seats locked. This will help prevent kids from playing in the trunk.

Driveway Dangers

Moving your vehicle in a driveway or parking area is dangerous. Toddlers and young children are often run over when they play near parked cars. **(1, 2)**

All vehicles have blind zones around them where the driver cannot see a child. Blind zones are biggest in high vehicles like pickups, vans, SUVs.

Prevention tips

- Walk around your vehicle to be certain that no children are there before starting the engine.
- Find other places for children to play. Teach them never to play in the driveway or parking area.

Every year many children die tragically in or around parked cars. Leaving a child in a car without an adult, even for a few minutes, is a type of child neglect. It is illegal in some states.

KIDS AND CARS

Unattended Children In Motor Vehicle Safety Act

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/modellawbackgrnd.pdf>

BACKGROUND

KIDS AND CARS is dedicated to eliminating the common practice of leaving children unattended in motor vehicles and therefore reducing the incidence of injury and death to children.

KIDS AND CARS was started in 1999 by survivor advocates who were determined to prevent death and injury because children are being left unattended in motor vehicles. Janette and Greig Fennell used their experience from being locked in a car trunk at gunpoint to get a Federal Regulation passed that mandates all cars must now have an internal trunk release as standard equipment.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) state that during July 2000-June 2001, an estimated 9,160 nonfatal injuries and 78 fatal injuries occurred in children 14 and younger as a result of being left unattended in or around motor vehicles that were not in traffic. To date, KIDS AND CARS has documented over 4500 cases where lives were endangered because children were left unattended in or around vehicles, including 625 child deaths within the last decade. (1)

Currently 9 states have laws making it illegal to leave children unattended in motor vehicles. We are working with the remaining states interested in passing legislation. Our goal is to have a law that specifically addresses the need for prevention and education about this dangerous behavior in every state.

There is a need for a law to raise public awareness about the dangers of leaving children unattended inside motor vehicles. The deaths and injuries caused by leaving children unattended in motor vehicles are predictable and preventable. Well-meaning parents and caregivers of all socioeconomic levels leave children alone in automobiles every day for a variety of reasons, but primarily because they are unaware of the dangers associated with leaving them alone. Through legislation and education the practice of leaving children unattended in motor vehicles can be greatly reduced with increased awareness of the risks associated with this dangerous practice. This model law may not work for every state but it intends to be a “best practices” model. It is a starting point for legislators to consider proposing a law in their state.

RATIONALE

The Unattended Children In Motor Vehicle Safety Act does not apply if an unattended child or another person is injured or medical services are rendered. Nothing in this act precludes prosecution under any other provision of law. (i.e., child neglect and/or endangerment laws, etc.)

There is no set or suggested time limit or distances because an injury or death can happen in an instant. Children are immediately at risk when left unattended inside a motor vehicle.

We suggest that the fines collected from violations be used for the development and implementation of community education programs about the dangers of leaving children unattended in motor vehicles. (i.e., Seventy percent of fines collected in the state of California go back to the county or city health department where the violation occurred)

Injuries and Deaths Among Children Left Unattended in or Around Motor Vehicles

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5126a3.htm>

National attention concerning motor vehicles (MVs) and child safety has focused largely on protecting children as occupants transported in traffic on public roads. However, children who are unattended in or around MVs that are not in traffic also are at increased risk for injury and death. CDC and the nonprofit Trauma Foundation examined data from two databases on both nonfatal and fatal nontraffic MV-related incidents. This report summarizes the results of that analysis, highlights the major causes of this type of childhood death and injury, and underscores the need for effective interventions.

Nationally representative data on nonfatal injuries treated in hospital emergency departments (EDs) from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) were examined (1). Data on fatal injuries occurring across the country were reported from a database developed by the Trauma Foundation's KIDS 'N CARS™ program. During July 2000--June, 2001, data from these two programs documented an estimated 9,160 nonfatal injuries and 78 fatal injuries among children aged <14 years who were left unattended in or around MVs that were not in traffic. (1)

NEISS-AIP, which is operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, collects data annually on approximately 500,000 cases from a nationally representative sample of 65 hospital EDs in the United States. National estimates of nonfatal injuries treated in hospital EDs were calculated by using the sum of sample weights of study cases; weights were derived based on the inverse of the probability of selection; confidence intervals (CIs) were computed by using a direct variance estimation procedure (1). Population estimates for computing rates were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Census.

NEISS-AIP study case-patients were children treated in a U.S. hospital ED after being injured while left unattended in or around MVs (e.g., cars, trucks, vans, and SUVs) not in traffic. These nontraffic injuries included those associated with 1) parked MVs on or off the street and 2) MVs in motion off the street. Children injured during the normal course of getting in or out of stationary MVs were excluded.

NEISS-AIP obtains data routinely for each nonfatal injury on the principal diagnosis, body part primarily affected, ED discharge disposition, and locale of occurrence (e.g., home or public place). Narratives describing each injury event were used to identify the surface where the incident occurred (e.g., driveway, parking lot, or street) and type of event. A classification scheme assigned cases to the following types of events: run over or backed over by an MV, struck by an MV, fell out of an MV in motion, or fell off of the exterior of an MV (e.g., the bed of a pick-up truck), and other specified (e.g., bumped against, dragged by, submerged in, or overheated in an MV).

The KIDS 'N CARS™ database was used to describe specific incidents involving children aged <14 years who died as a result of being left unattended in or around MVs. National estimates of fatalities cannot be derived from this database. KIDS 'N CARS™ identifies cases through 1) online searches of LexisNexis™, a service providing access to thousands of newspapers and magazines worldwide; 2) keyword searches on Internet search engines, the registration of keyword preferences with Internet providers and news media sites, and searches within archives of newspaper websites; 3) news accounts from a clipping service; 4) contacts

with child death review teams; and 5) information from an informal nationwide network of professional and personal contacts. Documentation from news media archives and other record sources is used to validate all cases identified.

A total of 192 NEISS-AIP study cases was identified, representing a national estimate of 9,160 (95% CI=5,344--12,976) children with nonfatal injuries treated in U.S. hospital EDs during July 2000--June 2001. Approximately 42% of injured children were aged <4 years, and 61.9% were male (Table 1). Injuries occurred predominantly to the head and neck region (30.4%) and the extremities (53.1%). Most (56.8%) injuries were minor contusions and abrasions; however, more serious injuries also were common (26.5% were fractures or internal injuries). Most (81.8%) injured children were treated and released from the ED. Most injuries occurred near the home (47.8%) or on public property (31.1%). Injuries occurred in driveways and parking lots in at least 27.2% of incidents (Table 2). The most common type of nonfatal incident was being struck by an MV, followed by being run over or backed over by an MV and falling out or off of an MV. For nonfatal incidents, approximately 70% of MVs were moving at a slow speed (e.g., moving forward or backward shortly after being set in motion), and approximately 20% were moving backward. (1)

The KIDS 'N CARS™ database provided information on 78 children who died during July 2000--June 2001 in 76 separate incidents. Fatalities occurred in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Of the fatally injured children, 64 (82.1%) were aged <4 years, and 42 (53.8%) were male. In 57 (73.1%) cases, the MV was located near a home (e.g., driveway, unpaved area near home, or street in front of home); in 39 (50%) cases, the child lived at that home. The driver was the parent in 12 (57.1%) of the 21 cases in which a child was backed over. The most common type of fatal incident was exposure to excessive heat inside an MV (e.g., when a child was left inside an MV during hot weather) (34.6%), followed by being backed over and being hurt when a child put an MV in motion (26.9%). Approximately 82% of fatal injuries occurred among children aged <4 years (Figure). (1, 2)

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Editorial Note:

The findings in this report highlight the characteristics of nontraffic-related injuries and deaths among children. Many more U.S. children aged <14 years are injured (e.g., an estimated 37,115 [CI=21,029--53,200] injury-related ED visits in 2000) or killed (e.g., 533 deaths in 1999) by being struck by a moving MV while in the street. However, the nontraffic-related incidents described in this report are an important cause of injuries and deaths among children. These incidents are preventable, and effective interventions must be determined to protect children.

The findings in this report are subject to at least six limitations. First, NEISS-AIP captures only injuries treated in hospital EDs and does not include children seen in physicians' offices and clinics. Second, NEISS-AIP provides statistically valid national estimates but not state and local estimates. Third, types of nonfatal incidents were classified by using brief narratives transcribed from medical records; further details about each incident were not available. Fourth, KIDS 'N CARS™ data are not population-based and probably undercount the true number of fatal cases nationally. Fifth, media coverage of these incidents might contain incomplete information and might be less common in large urban areas. Finally, online media

archives might exclude very small-circulation local newspapers. Because of these limitations, methods should be explored to obtain routine national data useful for characterizing and monitoring detailed circumstances of injuries and deaths from all types of nontraffic MV-related incidents involving children. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is assessing methods to identify cases of nontraffic MV-related injuries and deaths in children and to obtain details about injury-related circumstances (2).

The findings in this report are consistent with other studies that indicate that children left unattended in or around MVs are at increased risk for injury and death in incidents that involve parked MVs, slow-moving MVs, MVs moving backward in driveways and parking lots, MVs set in motion by a child, and trunk entrapment (3--10). In this report, excessive heat exposure while in an MV was the most common cause of death; however, scientific literature examining the circumstances of such incidents is minimal. (1, 2)

Several areas for possible intervention include education, legislation, regulation, and changes in vehicle design. Education campaigns aimed at parents and caregivers should communicate the following: 1) ensure adequate supervision when children are playing in areas near parked MVs; 2) never leave children alone in an MV, even when they are asleep or restrained; and 3) keep MVs locked in a garage or driveway and keep keys out of children's reach.

Laws related to endangering the life or health of a child by leaving the child unattended in an MV have been enacted by 11 states; the nature of these laws and associated penalties vary by state. In California, funds from 70% of fines resulting from noncompliance with its associated law will go to counties to support public education campaigns to address these preventable deaths and injuries.

Children might be protected further by commercially available vehicle enhancements, such as sensors that detect unseen obstacles behind an MV or devices that emit audible signals when an MV is in reverse. Evaluation of such interventions should be conducted to inform policy makers about their effectiveness in reducing nontraffic MV-related injuries and deaths among children.

Acknowledgments

This report was developed with contributions by J Fennell, T Struttman, KIDS 'N CARS™ program, Trauma Foundation, San Francisco, California. T Schroeder, C Downs, A McDonald, Div of Hazard and Injury Data Systems, Consumer Product Safety Commission. K Gotsch, Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

Whereas, These consequences include the danger of abduction, heat stroke, strangulation, trunk entrapment, being backed-over and personal injuries to themselves or others by causing accidental and uncontrolled movement of the vehicle.

Nonfatal Motor-Vehicle--Related Backover Injuries Among Children --- United States, 2001—2003

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5406a2.htm>

Motor-vehicle (MV)--related backovers (i.e., incidents involving children being struck by or rolled over by a vehicle moving in reverse) represent a risk for severe injury and death (1,2). To characterize nonfatal MV backover injuries among children, CDC analyzed data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP). This report summarizes the results of that analysis, which determined that, during 2001--2003, an estimated 7,475 children (2,492 per year) aged 1--14 years were treated for nonfatal MV backover injuries in U.S. hospital emergency departments (EDs). (2) The report also highlights differences in type and severity of MV backover injuries by age and underscores the need for effective interventions. NEISS-AIP data can increase the understanding of nonfatal MV backover injuries and help guide the development of prevention strategies, such as education, environmental improvements, and changes in vehicle design, that might help reduce these injuries among children.

NEISS-AIP provides data on approximately 500,000 consumer product-- and injury-related ED cases each year. Operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the program collects data on initial visits for all types and causes of injuries treated in EDs (3). NEISS-AIP data are drawn from a nationally representative sub-sample of 66 of 100 hospitals selected as a stratified probability sample of U.S. hospitals with a minimum of six beds and a 24-hour ED.

For this study, MV back-over injury cases were identified from narratives abstracted from medical records. NEISS-AIP obtains data for each nonfatal injury regarding the principal diagnosis, body part primarily affected, external cause of injury, ED discharge disposition, and location of the incident (e.g., home or public place). Cases were defined as nonfatal injuries to children aged 1--14 years as a result of being struck by or rolled over by an MV (e.g., car, truck, van, or sport utility vehicle) moving in reverse in a driveway, parking lot, or on a street. Cases involving child pedestrians (i.e., children standing, sitting, lying, playing, or walking) or children riding bicycles or tricycles near or behind an MV were included. Cases involving children injured while getting into or out of stationary MVs were excluded.

Each case was assigned a sample weight based on the inverse probability of selection; these weights were summed to provide national estimates of MV back-over injuries. Estimates were based on weighted data for 168 children treated for MV back-over injuries at NEISS-AIP hospital EDs during 2001--2003. Population estimates for 2001--2003 were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau to compute injury rates. A direct variance estimation procedure was used to calculate 95% confidence intervals (CIs) and to account for the complex sample design.

Of the 168 cases identified, 81 (48.2%) involved children aged 1--4 years; 92 (54.8%) of the children were male. Injuries occurred predominantly to the head, face, and neck region (47

cases [28.0%]) and to the extremities (90 cases [53.6%]). Injuries to the head, face, and neck region decreased with age, from a high of 31 (38.3%) among children aged 1--4 years to a low of three (7.5%) among those aged 10--14 years. Injuries to the extremities, specifically the lower part of the body, increased with age, from 24 (29.6%) among children aged 1--4 years to 29 (72.5%) among those aged 10--14 years. Ninety-four (56.0%) children sustained minor contusions and abrasions, and these varied by age group, from 40 (49.4%) among those aged 1--4 years to 25 (62.5%) among those aged 10--14 years. More serious injuries, such as fractures and internal injuries, occurred among 47 (28.0%) children; this proportion decreased with age, from 32 (39.5%) among children aged 1--4 years to seven (17.5%) among those aged 10--14 years. (1, 2)

The 168 study cases were weighted to provide estimates for the United States overall. During 2001--2003, an estimated 7,475 (CI = 4,453--10,497) children were treated in EDs for nonfatal MV back-over injuries, at an annual rate of 4.40 per 100,000 age-specific population (CI = 2.62--6.18) (Table).(2) Among all ages, the rate for females (4.60) was slightly higher than that for males (4.21). Approximately 86% of the injured children were classified as pedestrians; these children sustained MV back-over injuries at a rate six times greater (3.78) than that of children who were riding a bicycle or tricycle (0.62). Non-traffic events (i.e., those not occurring on public roadways) accounted for approximately 61% of MV back-over incidents, a rate of 2.67. Location of the incident was known in approximately 80% of cases; the majority of injuries occurred either at home (47.4%) or on public property (31.9%). For at least 40% of all cases, injuries occurred in driveways or parking lots. A majority of injured children (78.1%) were treated and released from the ED.

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Editorial Note:

The findings in this report indicate that, during 2001--2003, an estimated 2,492 children aged 1--14 years were injured annually after being struck by or rolled over by an MV moving in reverse. (2) Many were pedestrians near or behind an MV and were at home when the incident occurred. The majority were treated and released from hospitals. A study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration examined death certificate data and identified approximately 47 deaths in 1998 among children aged <19 years that were attributable to MV backover injuries (4). Of these deaths, 21 occurred in driveways. (1) The results of this study are consistent with those of other studies that illustrate the risk children face when left unattended near or behind an MV (1,2,5--7).

The findings in this report are subject to at least four limitations. First, NEISS-AIP captures only injuries treated in hospital EDs and does not include children seen in physician offices and clinics or who might not have received medical care. Second, NEISS-AIP provides national estimates only and does not allow for estimates by region, state, or local jurisdiction. Third, cases were identified from narratives obtained from medical records, but not all medical charts contained complete descriptions of events, such as whether a vehicle was in reverse. Finally, in cases with multiple injuries, only data regarding the most severe injury are recorded.

Various prevention strategies, including education, environmental modifications, and changes in vehicle design, might reduce the risk for MV back-over injuries among children. Public education to increase awareness among parents and caregivers should emphasize the

following: 1) adults should adequately supervise children who are playing in areas near parked MVs, 2) drivers should look carefully for children before and while backing up, and 3) MVs should be locked in garages or driveways with keys kept out of reach of children (6,8). Potential environmental modifications include fenced driveways, fenced play areas away from driveways and streets, and circular driveway designs that eliminate the need to back out. Potential automobile modifications include back-up warning alarms when vehicles are placed in reverse or mirrors, sensing devices, or cameras to alert drivers to out-of-sight objects, such as small children (1). Research is needed to determine the effectiveness of such approaches.

Data from injury surveillance systems such as NEISS-AIP highlight the preventable morbidity and mortality resulting from MV-related back-over injuries in children. Effective engineering and environmental approaches to prevent MV-related back-over injuries need to be identified, evaluated, and disseminated to public health and transportation officials and policy makers for implementation nationwide. Meanwhile, drivers and caregivers can take simple precautions to prevent these injuries. To this end, child MV safety programs and health professionals should ensure that parents, caregivers, and the public are aware of the risks for injury associated with MV back-overs and appropriate prevention measures.

Acknowledgments

This report is based on information contributed by T Schroeder, MS, C Irish, and other staff, Div of Hazard and Injury Data Systems, US Consumer Product Safety Commission. K Gotsch, MPH, P Holmgreen, MS, Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

The danger of blind spots

The area behind your vehicle can be a killing zone

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/cars/car-safety/car-safety-reviews/mind-that-blind-spot-1005/overview/index.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=danger%20of%20blind%20spots>

Every year, children are injured and killed because drivers (in some cases, parents) don't see them while backing up. According to KIDS AND CARS (www.kidsandcars.org), a nonprofit group that works to improve child safety around cars, at least 50 children are backed over every week in the U.S. (1) Forty-eight are treated in hospital emergency rooms and at least 2 children die. (2, 3) There were 474 fatal back-over accidents between 2001 and 2006, which represents almost half of all non-traffic fatalities that involved children. (1, 2)

A contributing factor is that larger vehicles (SUVs, pickups, and minivans), which have become increasingly popular, have larger blind spots than passenger cars. A blind spot is the area behind a vehicle that a person can't see from the driver's seat.

To help consumers understand how large some blind spots are, Consumer Reports has measured the blind spots of a number of popular models. The results for both an average-height driver (5 feet 8 inches) and a shorter driver (5 feet 1 inch) are listed in the accompanying charts.

To measure the blind spots, a 28-inch traffic cone was positioned behind the vehicle at the point where the driver could just see its top. As the illustration shows, longer and taller vehicles tend to have significantly larger blind spots. (The shading shows the length of each blind spot; lighter for an average-height driver, darker for a shorter driver.)

Bottom line: Your best defense against back-over accidents is to get out of your vehicle and check behind it just before you back up. If kids are nearby, make sure you can see them while backing up.

Leaving Children Unattended in Vehicles

http://fcs.tamu.edu/safety/passenger_safety/toolkit/youth_traffic_safety/leaving_children_unattended.pdf

The Statistics

In 2003, 42 children died of heat stroke because they had been left inside a vehicle. In July and August 2003, 22 children tragically died after being trapped in car trunks. **(1, 2)** Leaving children unattended in or around vehicles is a serious problem. More than one thousand cases involving injury or death have been documented so far. **(1)** Those injuries and deaths were caused by heat stroke, a vehicle being put in motion by a child, children being hit by vehicles backing up, children choking while alone in a car, being kidnapped, toxic fumes, activation of automatic power controls, or being trapped in car trunks. **(2)** Children should never be left unattended in or around vehicles.

Source: Kids 'N Cars, 2004.

Leaving Children Unattended in Hot Vehicles

Small children and infants are more sensitive to extreme heat. According to Dr. Martin Eichelberger, director of trauma surgery at Children's National Medical Center and president of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, "Heat rapidly overwhelms the body's ability to regulate temperature. In a closed environment, the body can go into shock and circulation to vital organs will begin to fail."

Heat exhaustion can occur at temperatures above 90 degrees and heat stroke can occur when temperatures rise above 105 degrees. When a child is enclosed in a hot car, the child loses body fluids and salts through sweating, causing heat exhaustion. If not treated immediately, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. In heat stroke, a child can no longer sweat. The body temperature rises to deadly levels leading to severe damage to the brain, liver and kidneys, or even death.

Keep in mind that a car is basically a metal box. The hot sun can turn this metal box into an oven. Nobody would ever consider leaving a child in an oven. When the outside temperature is 93 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees in just 20 minutes and 140 degrees in 40 minutes even if a window is cracked open. A car parked in direct sunlight can reach 131- 172 degrees Fahrenheit, even after only **fifteen** minutes. At that temperature it only takes a matter of minutes for children to die or suffer permanent disability.

Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 1999

Of the recently reported deaths, more than a third involved children who had crawled into unlocked cars during play and then perished in the sweltering heat. **(1,2)** With children that are naturally curious and often lacking in fear, unlocked cars can pose serious risks. Once a child gets into a vehicle, they often do not have the developmental skills to get themselves out again.

Trunk Entrapment

Since 1970, 1,175 people have been victims in 992 incidents of trunk entrapment. There are two main categories of victims of trunk entrapment — people who are deliberately locked in a motor vehicle trunk by a criminal, and those, usually children, who unintentionally lock themselves in a trunk. Between thirty-five and forty percent of victims ages 14 and under do not survive the entrapment episode, **(1)** compared to an overall fatality rate of twenty and twenty-

five percent of all victims. Because there is no government database for such statistics, it is likely that the incidence of trunk entrapment is underestimated. (2)

Often unintentional entrapment is the result of children playing games or exploring while looking for or retrieving items from a car trunk, or while adults are performing installation or repair work inside car trunks. To a child when playing hide and seek, the trunk may seem like the perfect hiding place. The months of July and August when outside temperatures are 85 degrees or higher are when the majority of unintentional trunk entrapment deaths occur. Car trunks provide a deadly combination of high temperature, humidity and poor ventilation.

As more and more cars come equipped with remote trunk releases, trunk openers on key chains and access to the trunk through fold down seats, it becomes easier for children to gain access.

Some cars come equipped with manual releases inside the trunk. In the future, a few car manufacturers have plans to equip family cars with infrared devices that will detect heat and motion. When the detector senses a person inside, it will automatically unlock the trunk. The reality is that most cars do not have a way to escape from inside the trunk once the lid is closed. However, dealers can install a trap resistant kit to allow children to escape from inside a locked trunk. Such a device has an illuminated yellow handle, connected to the latch by a cable. A child can easily find and turn the handle to release the trunk lid. When purchasing a new vehicle look for such features as trap-resistant trunk release systems.

Source: Drive Safer America, March 2000.

Tips for Parents

- Never leave your vehicle unlocked or let your children play in or around any vehicle(s).
- Always lock car doors and trunks and do not leave your car keys within reach or sight of children.
- Never leave children alone in a vehicle to run a quick errand.
- Teach kids not to play in or around cars.
- Supervise young children closely when they are around cars.
- Be especially careful when loading or unloading the trunk.
- Keep rear fold-down seats closed to help prevent kids from getting into the trunk from inside the car.
- Never leave your child in an unattended car, even with the windows down.
- Always make sure that all child passengers have left the car.
- If your child gets locked inside a car, get him out and dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.
- Make sure you check the temperature of the car seat surface and safety belt buckles before restraining your children in the car.
- Use a light covering to shade the seat of your parked car. Consider using windshield shades in front and back windows.
- Be careful with child-resistant locks. Teach older children how to disable the driver's door locks if they unintentionally become entrapped in a motor vehicle.
- Contact your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.
- If you see young children in a car unattended, please try to find the parents immediately or call police for help. Taking action immediately could save a child from serious harm, or even death.

Source: National SAFE KIDS Campaign , 6/99

Whereas, Nationally, four young children are killed in preventable non-traffic automobile incidents every week.

The Cameron Gulbransen KIDS AND CARS Safety Act of 2007 (S. 694 & HR 1216) Fact Sheet

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/legislation/factsheet.pdf>

At least four young children are killed in a non-traffic automobile incident every week. (3) The age of victims in these cases is usually less than 5-years-old. These tragedies are truly heart-wrenching - but also preventable. This bill addresses the leading causes of these needless deaths and injuries by directing the Secretary of Transportation to issue safety standards and take other action to reduce the incidence of child injury and death inside or outside of parked passenger motor vehicles.

The Need to Protect Children In and Around Vehicles

- Since 2001, over 1,000 children have died in non-traffic incidents and this statistic has been steadily rising. (1, 2)

Preliminary data indicate 219 documented fatalities in 2006. (1) The government currently does not collect data about non-traffic incidents, so we know that the real fatality numbers are much higher. (data provided by KIDS AND CARS, www.KidsAndCar.org)

- A 2002 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study (July 2000-June 2001) reported that over 9,160 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms due to non-traffic incidents.

The Bill

The Cameron Gulbransen KIDS AND CARS Safety Act of 2007 directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue safety standards to decrease the incidence of child injury and death. The Act:

- Establishes reasonable rulemaking deadlines regarding child safety, applicable to all passenger motor vehicles, in three ways:
 - Ensures that power windows and panels automatically reverse direction when they detect an obstruction to prevent children from being trapped, injured or killed.
 - Requires a rearward visibility performance standard that will provide drivers with a means of detecting the presence of a person behind the vehicle in order to prevent backing incidents involving death and injury, especially to small children and disabled people.
 - Requires the vehicle service brake to be depressed whenever the vehicle is taken out of park in order to prevent incidents resulting from children disengaging the gear shift and causing vehicles to roll away.
- Establishes a child safety information program, administered by the Secretary of Transportation. This will involve collecting non-traffic incident data, informing parents about these hazards to children and ways to mitigate them, as well as making this information available to the public through the Internet and other means.

Support

- Senators John E. Sununu (R-NH) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) are the prime senate sponsors; the House of Representatives companion bill is sponsored by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Congressman Peter King (R-NY)
- Groups supporting the bill include: KIDS AND CARS, Consumers Union, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, the American Academy of Pediatrics, Public Citizen, Kids in Danger, Trauma Foundation, The Zoie Foundation, Adrianna's Rule Foundation, Veronica's Eyes Foundation, Craig's Crusade and more.

Senator Clinton Announces Legislation to Protect Children in and Around Vehicles

Clinton Joins Congressman King, Long Island Parents Who Have Lost Children and Child Safety Advocates to Underscore Need to Improve Vehicle Safety

Garden City, NY – Following testimonials from parents who have lost children in tragic accidents that could be prevented with existing car safety technology, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton today announced that she is introducing bipartisan legislation with Senator John Sununu (R-NH) to improve the child safety features in new vehicles. She was joined by leadership of Consumers Union, who demonstrated the large blind zone behind vehicles that contributes to many of these horrific incidents, and Kids And Cars, an organization dedicated to improving the safety of children in and around parked vehicles. She was also joined by Representative Peter King (NY), who has introduced companion legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

“These tragedies are heart-wrenching, not only due to the unimaginable suffering these families endure, but also because they are preventable. The technology exists that can save children’s lives at relatively low cost and new innovations are being developed all the time. With modest, cost-effective steps, we can prevent scores of terrible automobile accidents from occurring across our nation. That’s why I am introducing legislation to make sure child safety technology is implemented in new vehicles. With my bill, we can have safer cars and safer kids across America,” said Senator Clinton.

"Even though the technology exists to protect families and children, the technology is not required to be installed. We have an obligation to resolve this as soon as possible. It is common sense," said Representative King.

Almost every other day, a young child is killed in a non-traffic automobile accident. **(3)** Since 1999, almost 1000 children have died in non-traffic, non-crash incidents and this number has been steadily rising. According to Kids And Cars, this is already the deadliest year. As of October 15, 2005, there have been 188 fatalities. **(1)** New York State alone has suffered over 60 non-traffic incidents, 15 of which resulted in fatality. The technology exists to protect families and children from these tragedies, but currently neither Congress nor the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration requires the technology be installed. Such technology is only available on a select few vehicles, or as an after-market product consumers have to purchase themselves.

Senator Clinton’s bill, the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act of 2005, addresses issues surrounding vehicles and child safety, such as children being backed over, strangled by power windows or killed when they or someone else inadvertently knocks a vehicle into motion. The bill directs the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to issue three regulations to decrease the incidence of child injury and death. The first regulation will ensure that power windows automatically reverse direction when they detect an obstruction to prevent children from being trapped, injured or killed. A second will provide drivers with a means of detecting the presence of a person or object behind their vehicle. And a third will provide for the vehicle service brake to be engaged to prevent vehicles from unintentionally rolling away. The bill also establishes a child safety information program administered by the Secretary of Transportation to collect non-traffic, non-crash incident data and disseminate information to parents about these hazards and ways to mitigate them.

“I commend Senator Clinton for introducing this lifesaving bill. Our children are being killed by preventable tragedies in unprecedented numbers,” said Janette Fennell, Founder of Kids And Cars. “We have recorded a dramatic spike in the number of children being killed and injured in non-traffic events this year. Congress needs to end these unthinkable deaths. There is absolutely nothing worse than the death of a child, except when you are a parent who learns afterwards technology existed that would have prevented this nightmare from happening. All the parents I know would move Heaven and Earth to prevent the injury or death of their child.”

“These tragedies have happened to too many families and will continue to happen at an alarming rate if something isn’t done. As a pediatrician and a father who lost a child, I can’t tell you how important it is to get these life saving technologies into all vehicles,” said Dr. Greg Gulbransen of Long Island.

“How many more kids have to die before something is done? It shocked me when I realized that you rarely leave a car dealership without such standard devices as cruise control and cup-holders; yet devices that will save countless children’s lives are not standard equipment,” said Jamie Schaefer-Wilson, a Westchester mother and child safety advocate.

“The time to act is now before another parent has to go through the agony that these parents have been forced to endure. These are preventable deaths. The technology is available that can prevent these tragedies. We urge auto makers and the federal government to address this critical public safety issue,” said David Champion, senior director of automotive testing for Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine.

The technology exists that can save children’s lives at relatively low cost and new innovations are being developed all the time. Power window sensors, for example, cost only \$8-12 a window. Brakeshift interlocks are already standard in most passenger vehicles, but where they aren’t, they cost only \$5 a car. Backover warning systems cost a bit more in today’s market, approximately \$300 a car, but if these or similar technologies were required, the market would create even more competition and drive down the price.

Child Safety Advocates and Victims Join Senators Clinton and Sununu and Representatives Schakowsky and King to Demand Passage of Tougher Laws to Stop Deaths and Injuries of Children Due to Motor Vehicle Design Flaws

Victims to Lobby on Eve of Senate Hearing on Child Safety Issues

<http://www.commondreams.org/news2007/0227-03.htm>

WASHINGTON - February 27 - Child safety advocates and victims from across America teamed up together in Washington, D.C. today to demand federal safety standards to prevent children from dying in non-traffic automobile incidents such as being backed-over or strangled by power windows.

“Every week at least four children needlessly die in and around cars, said Janette Fennell, president of KIDS AND CARS. “This important child safety legislation will stem the tide of future tragedies. Our children simply cannot wait. We know this is a growing problem, we have the technology to solve it, and now we need legislation to get federal action,” she added.

Since 2000, at least 1,000 children have died in non-traffic incidents, with 219 in 2006 alone. Back-over incidents have increased dramatically claiming the lives of 474 children from 2002-2006 compared to 128 from 1997-2001 and now account for half of all non-traffic fatalities involving children. The federal government does not collect data about non-traffic incidents, so the actual fatality numbers are likely much higher. (1, 3)

A 2002 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over 9,100 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms due to non-traffic incidents in a one-year time period.

“By taking simple, common sense steps using technology that already exists at low cost, we can make our cars safer for our children and protect them from these deadly, avoidable accidents. We owe it to families to do everything we can to give drivers a warning and give kids a chance,” said Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY).

“Cars don’t need to be moving to be dangerous. Already this year at least 12 children have died as a result of non-traffic automobile accidents,” said Senator John Sununu (R-NH). “Senator Clinton and I have reintroduced our child safety legislation because this issue remains an urgent public safety matter. By taking responsible, affordable precautions – such as installing backover warning systems, power window strangulation prevention mechanisms and brakeshift interlocks – we can save lives.”

The Cameron Gulbransen KIDS AND CARS Safety Act of 2007, sponsored by Senators Clinton and Sununu and Representatives Schakowsky and King, addresses non-traffic safety problems. The bill directs the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations to decrease the incidence of child injury and death:

- Ensure power windows automatically reverse direction when they detect an obstruction to prevent children from being trapped, injured or killed;
- Provide drivers with a means of detecting the presence of a person or object behind their vehicle;

- Provide for the vehicle service brake to be engaged to prevent vehicles from unintentionally rolling away; and
- Establish a child safety information program to disseminate information to parents about these hazards and ways to mitigate them; as well begin collecting data about non-traffic incidents.

Seven families of children who were killed in recent non-traffic incidents came to share their stories in the hope that other parents be spared future losses. The victims who traveled to Washington in support of the legislation are: Sue Auriemma, Manhasset, NY; Packy Campbell, Farmington, NH; Britt Gates, Anthony, KS; Angela and Tim Gridley, Cedartown, GA; Christine Isakson, Waterford, VA; Julie and Smith Peck, Marietta, GA; and Arden Rosenfeld, Boca Raton, FL.

“Year after year, hundreds of young lives are needlessly lost because Congress has failed to pass legislation that would make cars safer for children,” said Congresswoman Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee that has jurisdiction over the legislation. “As the grandmother of four, it breaks my heart that so many families have been destroyed by accidents that are entirely preventable. We cannot afford to wait any longer to pass this crucial piece of legislation because thousands of children's lives are at stake.”

“I can’t imagine a more horrible way for a parent to lose a child,” said Representative Peter King (R-NY). “The loss of one child is a terrible tragedy, but the loss of hundreds of children year after year is inexcusable. We have the technology to prevent these unfortunate accidents. At this point, there is no reason that it shouldn’t be a standard feature in all new vehicles.”

A broad coalition of consumer, health, medical and safety groups support passage of the House and Senate legislation including the American Academy of Pediatrics, Public Citizen, Kids in Danger, Trauma Foundation, The Zoie Foundation, Adrianna’s Rule Foundation, Veronica’s Eyes Foundation, Craig’s Crusade and more.

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Supporting Information:

Children Unattended in Vehicles

Whereas, Each year children are left unattended in and around motor vehicles that can lead to deadly consequences, and

Pg. 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16

Whereas, These consequences include the danger of abduction, heat stroke, strangulation, trunk entrapment, being backed-over and personal injuries to themselves or others by causing accidental and uncontrolled movement of the vehicle, and

Pg. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12,

Whereas, Nationally, four young children are killed in preventable non-traffic automobile incidents every week, therefore be it

Pg. 12, 14, 16

Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent organizations advocate and support legislation that prevents innocent children from being injured or killed in non-traffic automobile accident, and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations sponsor educational programs for families, teachers, administrators, and community members on the dangers of children being left unattended in and around motor vehicles.

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent organizations partner with national, state, and local child safety organizations to address the issue of non-traffic automobile related incidents involving our children and youth.