



NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

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

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KidsAndCars.org Research Validated by Federal Government Report

New study confirms over 33 people die and 16,000 are injured every week due to nontraffic incidents

January 28, 2009 - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its first-ever “Not-in-Traffic Surveillance 2007” report Tuesday, conclusively confirming that preventable deaths and injuries associated with motor vehicles happen every year, not only on public roadways, but on private driveways and in parking lots. The safety agency report estimates that thousands of tragic and costly vehicle incidents occurred in 2007 when backing over children and other pedestrians, as well as the closing of powerful automatic vehicle windows on necks and limbs of car occupants.

Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org, the national nonprofit organization advocating for child and automotive safety said, “This is an important day, one that has been long in coming. The release of this report solidifies once and for all that focus must be placed on the interaction of consumers and vehicles.....no matter where an incident takes place. These data confirm what parents and safety groups have known for years that too many children were being killed in their own driveways and nothing was being done about it.”

The NHTSA report found that in 2007 alone, 221 people were killed in backover incidents, and 14,000 suffered injuries.

An additional 393 fatalities and 20,000 injuries were due to frontover incidents or being struck by a vehicle in some manner. It also concluded that an average of 588 fatalities happen annually involving passengers inside the vehicles where children are strangled to death by powerful rising windows, left in hot vehicles to die from hyperthermia, or perish from carbon monoxide poisoning and vehicle fires. All totaled, in 2007, NHTSA estimates there were 1,747 fatalities and 841,000 injuries in nontraffic incidents. The sheer magnitude of these numbers is stunning. Over 33 people die and 16,170 injuries occur *every week* due to nontraffic incidents.

“Passage of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act in 2007 was the pivotal moment in changing how our society thinks about these terrible events,” said Jacqueline Gillan, vice president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a coalition of consumer and insurance groups working for improved safety laws. “KidsAndCars.org and the dozens of parents and family members who struggled with us for several years to pass this lifesaving statute are credited with its success. Without their courage and dedication, this official data would not be collected and vehicle safety standards for better rear visibility would never happen.”

This legislation, among other key provisions, directed NHTSA for the first time to collect data about motor vehicle incidents that take place off the public roads and highways.

KidsAndCars.org has been calling for the government to collect data about instances that take place off the public roads and highways for over a decade. Their work began when Janette Fennell and her family were involved in a near death trunk entrapment incident. She quickly learned that there were no data available as to how often people were put into

car trunks alive, because in most cases these incidents took place on private property (driveways, garages, parking lots, etc.) The government's and automakers response was basically, "no data, no problem." She then began building her own database to prove that indeed these incidents were not only taking place, but there was between a 20-25% trunk entrapment fatality rate. After successfully working towards the implementation of internal trunk releases, many other incidents that take place in and around motor vehicles on private property were brought to her attention.

KidsAndCars.org was born and the organization's success has been based on data collection, public education and awareness, policy changes, regulations and survivor advocacy.

"My heart pours out to the thousands of families who have lost a loved one in these predictable and preventable nontraffic incidents, said Fennell. "Those children who have been lost have always been the inspiration for our work. We know all too well that the human body cannot win in a confrontation with an automobile."

KidsAndCars.org recommendations to keep children safe include:

- Walk around and behind a vehicle prior to moving it.
- Know where your kids are. Make children move away from your vehicle to a place where they are in full view before moving the car and know that another adult is properly supervising children before moving your vehicle.
- Teach children that "parked" vehicles might move. Let them know that they can see the vehicle; but the driver might not be able to see them.
- Consider installing cross view mirrors, audible collision detectors, rear view video camera and/or some type of back up detection device.
- Measure the size of your blind zone (area) behind the vehicle(s) you drive. A 5-foot-1-inch driver in a pickup truck can have a rear blind zone of approximately 8 feet wide by 50 feet long.
- Be aware that steep inclines and large SUVs, vans and trucks add to the difficulty of seeing behind a vehicle.
- Hold children's hand firmly when leaving the vehicle.
- Teach your children to never play in, around or behind a vehicle and always set the emergency brake.
- Keep toys and other sports equipment off the driveway.
- Homeowners should trim landscaping around the driveway to ensure they can see the sidewalk, street and pedestrians clearly when backing out of their driveway. Pedestrians also need to be able to see a vehicle pulling out of the driveway.
- Never leave children alone in or around cars; not even for a minute.
- Maintain control of power windows. Most cars come equipped with a "lock out" switch, which allows the driver -- and only the driver -- to operate all windows in the car

For additional information visit www.KidsAndCars.org

NHTSA "Not-in-Traffic Surveillance 2007" report:

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/NCSA/Content/NITS/811085.pdf>

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About KidsAndCars.org: Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidAndCars.org promotes awareness among parents, caregivers and the general public about the dangers to children, including backover and frontover incidents, and heatstroke from being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy change and survivor advocacy.