



NEWS RELEASE

General Motors

FOR RELEASE: April 26, 2001

CONTACT(S): Terry Rhadigan, General Motors (810)947-6990; Kellee Edmonds, National SAFE KIDS Campaign® (202) 662-0600

General Motors Announces Important New Technology To Help Save Children Trapped In Hot Cars



NEW YORK - General Motors today announced pioneering new technology designed to help prevent children from dying or becoming permanently injured in dangerously hot vehicles. GM and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign® also released data indicating that at least 120 children - most of them age 3 and under - have died of heatstroke in hot, parked cars since 1996.

To address this problem, GM today unveiled a new low-energy radar sensor and a national public awareness campaign. The sensor technology is so sophisticated that it can detect motion as subtle as the breathing of an infant sleeping in a rear-facing child safety seat.

"We are targeting a sensor like this for certain vans and full-size utilities; we intend to begin this rollout in the 2004 calendar year, to alert caregivers or passersby about the presence of an unattended child in a potentially dangerous, hot vehicle," said GM Vice Chairman Harry Pearce.

The sensor will focus primarily in the rear seating area, where children are most likely to be. Once it detects that a child or another living being, such as a pet, is present and that the temperature is at or is likely going to increase to potentially dangerous levels, the sensor will trigger a unique horn alarm. The sensor will then cause the horn to sound three distinct "chirps," similar to the "S" in an SOS distress signal.

The thresholds for sounding the alarm are being developed based on data collected last fall during an unprecedented study funded by GM of Canada and conducted by internationally known pediatric hyperthermia researchers at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

"Just as we acted swiftly and boldly three years ago to address the child trunk entrapment issue, GM is moving quickly today to address this serious safety problem," said Pearce.

"Our researchers - parents and grandparents themselves - were alarmed to discover how many children were dying needlessly in hot cars because parents and caregivers are simply unaware of the risk. We really don't know how many children are harmed in this way each year because there are no databases that collect this specific information. We obtained our statistical information as a result of a careful review of various newspapers. It's likely that the actual number of deaths and serious injury is much higher.

"Whatever the true number, the fact that these deaths are totally preventable makes them all the more tragic," said Pearce.

According to Dr. Oded Bar-Or, a pediatrician and director of the Children's Exercise and Nutrition Centre at McMaster University, extreme heat affects infants and small children more quickly and dramatically than adults. Because of their smaller size, their core can increase three to five times faster than an adult. Heatstroke, or hyperthermia, occurs when the body's core (rectal) temperature reaches 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Dr. Bar-Or's research revealed that the air temperature in a previously air-conditioned small car exposed to the sun on a 95-degree day exceeds 122 degrees within 20 minutes and 150 degrees within 40 minutes.

Dr. Bar-Or emphasized that leaving a window slightly opened, or "cracked," on a sunny day may do little to prevent the heat inside a vehicle from rising to a level that is dangerous for children, vulnerable adults and pets.

Because of the misperception that opening the windows may make a difference, and because of a general lack of awareness about this issue, GM, in partnership with the National SAFE KIDS Campaign® will immediately launch a national public education effort. The campaign, called "Never Leave Your Child Alone," will caution parents and caregivers not to leave children unattended in vehicles, and to always keep cars locked while they are in garages or driveways.

"Once again, GM has shown leadership when it comes to our children," said Dr. Heather Paul, executive director of the National SAFE Kids Campaign® "We will be working with them to alert parents who are often unaware of the danger children face in warm weather, and we look forward to this new technology."

"This low-energy radar sensor should help save lives and prevent needless injury before it occurs," said Pearce. "Just as important, however, is the need to get the message out: It is never safe to leave a child alone in a vehicle - even for a few minutes."

General Motors (NYSE: GM), the world's largest vehicle manufacturer, designs, builds and markets cars and trucks worldwide. In 2000, GM earned \$5 billion on sales of \$183.3 billion. It employs about 386,000 people globally.