



Media Alert

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MIEMSS Reminds Everyone of the Risks of Heatstroke in Children Never Leave Your Child Alone in a Car

We join the families and the entire Baltimore/Washington community in mourning the deaths of two young children who were left inside of cars for hours in the summer heat. Across the country, 19 children have died in this manner in 2013. A child's temperature can rise five times faster than an adult's can. In a closed car, the temperature goes up 19 degrees every 10 minutes.

Too often when this type of tragedy occurs we hear "Who could have done that—it could never happen to me." The reality is it can happen to anyone, and it happens year-round across the USA and Canada. Instead of questioning why, please educate everyone you talk with this week. To gain perspective on such a tragic incident, we ask that concerned citizens read "[Fatal Distraction: Forgetting a Child in the Back seat of a Car Is a Horrifying Mistake. Is It a Crime?](#)" by Gene Weingarten, Washington Post Staff Writer.

Unfortunately, no one is immune to this kind of tragedy. Parents and caregivers can cut down the number of deaths and near misses by remembering to **ACT**.

- **Avoid** heat stroke-related injury and death by:
 - Never leaving your child alone in the car—even for a minute
 - Consistently locking unattended vehicle doors and trunks to keep children from entering vehicles alone

- **Create reminders and habits** that give you and your child's caregiver a safety net:
 - Place a purse, briefcase, gym bag, cell phone, or an item that is needed at your next stop, in the back seat.
 - Set the alarm on your cell phone or computer calendar as a reminder to drop your child off at childcare.
 - Establish a peace-of-mind plan. When you drop off your child, make a habit of calling or texting all other caregivers so all of you know where your child is at all times.
- **Take action** if you see an unattended child in a vehicle:
 - Dial **9-1-1** immediately and follow the instructions that emergency personnel provide. They are trained to determine if a child is in danger. One call could save a life.

The EMS for Children's Program at MIEMSS and Safe Kids Maryland Coalition have joined with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Safe Kids Worldwide in an effort to reduce these deaths by reminding parents and caregivers about the dangers of heatstroke in young children. The July 2013 issue of the Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS) includes a comprehensive review of the pathophysiology and emergency treatment for children presenting in heat stroke.

Safe Kids coalitions and chapters across Maryland will be educating families on the dangers of kids left alone in cars. They are asking that flyers be placed in primary care practices, emergency departments, daycares, and summer camps.

For additional information on Heat Stroke Awareness Day and keeping kids safe in cars, visit NHTSA's "Parents Central" site at www.safercar.gov/parents/Home.htm and Safe Kids World Wide "Buckle Up" site at www.safekids.org/heatstroke.

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