



Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

1200 North State Route 53 • Tiffin, Ohio 44883-9799 • Tel.: 419-448-0640 • Fax: 419-448-8743

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Contact: Kaitlyn Boehler
Sen. Co. Safe Communities Coordinator
Phone: 419-448-0640
boehlerkn@tiffin.edu

Hot cars kill children

Heatstroke prevention tips for parents and caregivers

Along with crashes, heatstroke is the number one vehicle-related killer of children in the United States. One child dies from heatstroke nearly every 10 days from being left in a car. In 2018, there were 52 preventable deaths of children in vehicles, a 21 percent increase from the previous year.

Leaving a child alone in a vehicle can lead to tragedy. These deaths, while accidental, are always preventable. Here are some helpful tips to make sure it doesn't happen to your family.

Remember:

- Never leave a child alone in a parked car, even with the windows rolled down or the air conditioning on. A child's body temperature can rise three to five times faster than an adult's. A core body temperature of 107 degrees is lethal.
- Always look in both the front and back of the vehicle before locking the door and walking away.
- Heatstroke can occur in temperatures as low as 57 degrees. On an 80-degree day, temperatures inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels in just 10 minutes.

If you are a bystander and see a child in a hot vehicle:

- Make sure the child is okay and responsive. If not, call 911 immediately.
- If the child appears to be okay, attempt to locate the parents or have the facility's security or management page the car owner over the PA system.
- If the child is not responsive or appears to be in distress, attempt to get into the car to assist the child—even if that means breaking a window. Many states have "Good Samaritan" laws that protect people from lawsuits for getting involved to help a person in an emergency.

The warning signs of heatstroke include red, hot and moist or dry skin; no sweating; a strong rapid pulse or a slow, weak pulse; nausea; confusion; or acting strangely. If a child exhibits any of these signs after being in a hot vehicle, quickly spray the child with cool water or with a garden hose— NEVER put a child in an ice bath. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Remember: kids and hot cars are a deadly combination. Don't take the chance. *Look Before You Lock.*

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