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STATISTICS

In 2008 there have been at least eight (8) hyperthermia vehicular deaths of infants and children. Last year there were at least thirty-five (35) such fatalities in the United States which sadly followed 42 and 30 child deaths in 2006 and 2005 respectively. Since 1998 there have been at least 368 of these needless tragedies. These incidents can occur even on days with relatively mild (i.e., ~ 70 degrees F) temperatures and vehicles can reach life-threatening temperatures very rapidly.

- U.S. child hyperthermia deaths, 1998-2007: at least **368**
- Average number of U.S. child hyperthermia fatalities per year since 1998: **36** (one every 10 days)

Airbags vs. Hyperthermia Deaths

In the three-year period of 1990-1992, before airbags became popular, there were only 11 known child hyperthermia deaths. During the past three years, 2005-2007, when most young children are being placed in back seats instead of front seat, there have been at least 107 known fatalities from hyperthermia...an almost ten-fold increase from the rate of the early 1990s. **[Important note: This in no way implies that children be placed in the front seat or that airbags be disabled]**

Circumstances

An examination of media reports for a ten year period (1998 through 2007) regarding child vehicular hyperthermia deaths shows the following circumstances:

- 51% - child "forgotten" by caregiver
- 30% - child playing in unattended vehicle
- 18% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult
- 1% - circumstances unknown

Ages

Children who have died from vehicular hyperthermia in the United States (1998-2007) have ranged in age from 7 weeks to 13 years. Below are the percentage of deaths (and the number of deaths) sorted by age. Thirty-three percent (33%) of hyperthermia deaths involve children under the age of one-year. In most states, infants are required to ride in rear-facing car seats, in the back seat of vehicles. The average age is approximately 24 months.

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • <1 year old = 33% (113) | • 5-years old = 3% (10) | • 10-years old = 1% (3) |
| • 1-year old = 22% (77) | • 6-years old = 2% (6) | • 11-years old = 0% (0) |
| • 2-years old = 21% (75) | • 7-years old = 1% (2) | • 12-years old = < 1% (1) |
| • 3-years old = 12% (43) | • 8-years old = 1% (2) | • 13-years old = < 1% (1) |
| • 4-years old = 5% (18) | • 9-years old = 1% (2) | • Unknown = 1% (2) |



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Safety Tips from KIDS AND CARS

Never leave children alone in or around cars; not even for a minute.

Put something you'll need like your cell phone, handbag, a KIDS AND CARS sunshade, employee ID or brief case, etc., on the floor board in the back seat. Get in the habit of always opening the back door of your vehicle every time you reach your destination to make sure no child has been left behind. This will soon become a habit. We call this the "Look...then lock campaign"

Keep a large teddy bear in the child's car seat when it's not occupied. When the child is placed in the seat, put the teddy bear in the front passenger seat. It's a visual reminder that anytime the teddy bear is up front you know the child is in the back seat in a child safety seat.

Use drive-thru services when available. (restaurants, banks, pharmacies, dry cleaners, etc.)

If you see a child alone in a vehicle, get involved. If they are hot or seem sick, get them out as quickly as possible. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Keep vehicles locked at all times; even in the garage or driveway and always set your parking brake.

Keys and/or remote openers should never be left within reach of children.

Make sure all child passengers have left the vehicle after it is parked.

Be especially careful about keeping children safe in and around cars during busy times, schedule changes and periods of crisis or holidays.

When a child is missing, check vehicles and car trunks immediately.

Use your debit or credit card to pay for gas at the pump.

Make arrangements with your child's day care center or babysitter that you will always call them if your child will not be there on a particular day as scheduled. This is common courtesy and sets a good example that everyone who is involved in the care of your child is informed of their whereabouts on a daily basis. Ask them to phone you if your child doesn't show up when expected. Many children's lives could have been saved with a telephone call from a concerned child care provider. Give child care providers all your telephone numbers, including that of an extra family member or friend, so they can always confirm the whereabouts of your child.

For additional information about ways to keep children safe in and around vehicles, visit our website at www.KidsAndCars.org