



PRESS RELEASE

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CHILD SAFETY: NEVER LEAVE KIDS IN A CAR ON A HOT DAY

MOSES LAKE – Whether it's snowing, cool and sunny or a sweltering 90 degree day, it's never a good idea to leave children unattended in a parked car – for any length of time, even if the windows are down and the doors are locked.

As the Columbia Basin begins to move toward hot summer temperatures, Grant County Emergency Management (GCEM), along with the Grant County Health District, is warning residents today of the risks involved with leaving infants and young children alone in a car on a hot day.

According to SAFE KIDS® USA, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury, an average of 25 children die in the United States each year as the result of being left in a car on a warm day. Don't let this avoidable tragedy affect your family.

To help parents and guardians best understand the risks involved with leaving young children and infants alone in cars, GCEM and the Health District provides both safety and health information for them to take into consideration throughout the year.

A child's health:

- Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can occur rapidly in enclosed vehicles. A recent General Motors and SAFE KIDS® Coalition study found that children are more vulnerable to heat because a child's body temperature increases three to five times faster than that of an adult. Heat stroke in infants is primarily associated with increased environmental temperatures or poor fluid intake.
- On a 93-degree day, the inside of a car can exceed 125 degrees Fahrenheit in about 20 minutes. The temperature inside of a car is hotter than outside temperatures, and can climb rapidly.
- Heat stroke occurs rapidly in infants who are ill or have other predisposed health conditions - but even healthy infants are at high risk when left in a hot car.
- Heat stroke can occur in a matter of minutes for young children and infants.

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- With heat stroke, children's skin become red and dry, and they are unable to produce sweat to reduce their core body temperature. Children's heart rates then increase, and they eventually become confused and lose consciousness before their organ systems begin to fail.
- "Cracking" the windows enough to let in air but to keep others out is not an effective way to avoid the heat risks involved with leaving a child alone in a car on a hot day.
- Adults are less sensitive to heat than young children. Even if temperature inside of a car doesn't feel to hot for an adult, it may be fatal for young children.
- Seek emergency medical attention if you know or think that your child has been exposed to high temperatures by having been left in or accidentally trapped in a car.

A child's personal safety:

- Cars are not always child proof. If left unattended, children may be able to reach the cigarette lighter and burn themselves; shift the car from the parked position, endangering themselves and others around them; or become entangled in the seat belt.
- Never leave the keys in the car. A child who is able to remove himself from restraints or enter into a car may be able to turn on the car, which may result in personal injury or injury to others nearby.
- Children left alone in a car are also at risk for being abducted by an adult.
- Teach your child never to play in the trunk. Keep the rear fold-down seats closed to help prevent kids from getting into the trunk from inside the car.
- Teach children not to play in or around cars.
- Never let infants sleep unattended in the car.
- If your child gets locked inside a car, dial 9-1-1 immediately.

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