



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE



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State Police Advisory

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AUTOMOBILE HEAT-RELATED DEATHS CAN BE PREVENTED

Leaving children unattended inside automobiles when temperatures outside soar is a dangerous – and sometimes fatal – action, the **Connecticut State Police** reminded motorists today.

The summertime weather that moved into the state this week serves as a reminder that parents, guardians, day care providers and babysitters must be made aware of the dangers involved in leaving children in cars. Summer is the season when children have more free time and engage in more outdoor activities, but they may be supervised less. They should never be left in a locked car or with access to parked vehicles or unlocked trunks.

During 2004, 35 children nationwide died due to automobile heat-related deaths. This figure includes those children left unattended and those who entered parked cars. In the last five years, 174 children across the country died from the same circumstances, according to the national organization Kids in Cars. So far in 2005, four children have died. These numbers are staggering because these deaths are completely preventable.

It only takes a few minutes for the inside temperature of a car to rise into the triple digits during summer weather. Studies on thermal injury to children show that “dry heat” temperatures, within a closed vehicle, can become dangerous to small children and infants in only minutes. A high level of humidity can reduce that time by one half.

Additionally, body temperature in children increases three to five times faster than that of an adult, leaving them more vulnerable when left unattended or trapped inside a motor vehicle. Even temperatures as low as 60 degrees Fahrenheit can become dangerously high in an enclosed auto within minutes and can cause heatstroke or death.

As a reminder for the summer of 2005, **the Connecticut State Police urge all drivers to never leave a child unattended inside a car.** Under Connecticut Law, Leaving a Child Unsupervised in a Motor Vehicle could result in a felony charge.

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