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Beat the Heat II

Kent, Wash. - June 9, 2015- One more important - maybe the most important, beat the heat information piece is on kids and cars.

Warm weather brings potential dangers, especially for the young. Hyperthermia, or a much higher than normal core body temperature, is often the result of children being left in vehicles, unattended.

According to San Francisco State University, 44 children died of hyperthermia in 2013 after being left alone in a vehicle on a warm day. Not surprisingly, the months of June, July, August, and September are when the majority of these tragedies took place.

Over half of children who die after being left in a vehicle are under the age of two and 95% are under the age of five. These young children are dependent for their safety on adults making good choices.

Myth: There only is a danger to kids on very hot days.

Truth: On a 72 degree day the internal temperature in a vehicle can rise 35-40 degrees in approximately one hour when the windows are rolled up due to solar radiation.

Myth: "Cracking" the window slightly will keep children cool.

Truth: Studies have shown that leaving windows slightly open has little effect on the temperature inside a vehicle since solar radiation is primarily heating the objects in the vehicle, not the air.

Myth: Children can handle extremes in temperature.

Truth: Young children do not have the internal temperature regulating mechanism that adults have. Also, children dehydrate more quickly than adults.

Myth: It is legal to leave a child unattended in a parked vehicle for a short period of time in Washington State.

Truth: RCW 46.61.685 and RCW 9.91.060 strictly prohibit leaving children unattended in vehicles.

What can people do to help avoid this tragedy? Here are some tips:

1. Any time you leave your vehicle, take all children with you. It will slow you down, it will create more work, but it may save a child's life and it *is* the law.
2. If you need a reminder about children in the back seat, place your briefcase or purse next to the child. Another "trick" is to leave the diaper bag on the front seat as a reminder. These types of reminders are especially important if you do not regularly carry children in your vehicle.
3. Get into the habit of "looking before you leave". As you exit your vehicle scan the interior to look for children or other things that need your attention.
4. Place electronic "reminders" to yourself on your PDA, smart phone, or email calendar to check on your child.
5. If your spouse or other adult is carrying a child and does not normally do so, call them to ensure that the child has been removed from the vehicle.
6. Ensure that daycares and schools notify you promptly if your child does not show up as scheduled.
7. If you are concerned about a child you see alone in a vehicle, call 9-1-1.



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