Kids in Hot Cars

On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked car can be 30°C to 40°C hotter than the outside temperature.

Facts

- On a 32.5°C day in 2009 the inside of a parked car had a recorded temperature of **75.1°C**. *

- 54% of the temperature increase occurs within **8 minutes** of closing the car. *

- 79% of the temperature increase occurs within **30 minutes**. *

- Darker coloured cars can reach slightly higher temperatures than lighter coloured cars. *

- The increase of temperature is related to the amount of glass surface. The glass allows the sun's shortwave radiation to heat objects inside the vehicle which then heats the air trapped inside the car.

- Larger cars can heat up just as fast as smaller cars.

- The colour of a car's interior trim has no effect on cabin temperature.

- Research shows that with windows open 4.5 cm the average temperature inside a car was 10.6°C degrees cooler than in a closed car, but with both cars reaching dangerously high peak temperatures. *

    * Temperature in Vehicles, RACQ 2008/2009

In NSW it is against the law to leave your child unattended in the car.

What are the Risks?

- The temperature and humidity begin to increase inside the car while the airflow decreases.

- As the temperature increases inside the car a child can begin to develop heat stress and can start to dehydrate.

- Young children are more sensitive to heat than older children and adults, as their body temperature can rise 3 to 5 times faster. This puts them at greater risk as their body temperature reaches dangerous levels much sooner.

- If a child becomes distressed and tries to get out of a restraint, they could become entangled in the harness.

What if I find a child unattended in a car?

- Look for the parents or carers.
- If the car is unlocked, open doors and shade glass with towels or blankets. Remove the child to a cool area if you are at all concerned about their condition.
- If the car is locked, see if the child is able to unlock the car from the inside.
- If you can't find a parent, call 000.
- If you have called 000, are still concerned for the health of the child and are unable to unlock the car, break a window away from the child and remove them to a cool area.

child safety is no accident

Safer Practices

- If you have to leave the car, even to run a quick errand, take your child with you.
- Never use the car as a substitute "babysitter".
- Never leave a child in a car without adult supervision for any length of time, not even a minute!
- Lock cars & secure keys when at home to prevent children playing inside the car.
- Make "*look before you leave*" a routine whenever you get out of the car, checking that a child has not been left behind in the vehicle.
- Locate and use 'pay at the pump' service stations in your area, get your partner to fill the car, or get petrol when there is another adult in the vehicle with you.

NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN ALONE IN A CAR

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Safe Travelling in Hot Weather

- Do not leave your children in the car for any period of time without adult supervision.

- Provide plenty of cool water or fluids regularly during the journey.

- Dress children to promote airflow around their body. Have them wear lightweight fabric and dress them comfortably.

- When planning long journeys, consider travelling in the cooler hours of the day.

- Plan to stop every 2 hours so all passengers including the child, have an opportunity to get out of the car and move around.

- Adjust restraint harness each time you use it, but particularly in summer when children are wearing lightweight clothing.

- For rearward facing restraints, it is not recommended that you use a hood to protect the baby from the sun. A hood can reduce air-flow around a baby's head and lead to over-heating. A visor or sunshade on the car window is a safer alternative.

- On every trip, short or long, take the time to check your children's safety by re-checking the fit of their restraint harness.

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