

# California Department of Public Health Vehicle Occupant Safety Program (VOSP)

## Summer 2018 • e-Newsletter for California's Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Community

This quarterly e-Newsletter provides a summary of CPS laws and programmatic support for the California community of local health departments, instructors, technicians, and advocates.

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### CPS Parent Brochures

Additional printed copies of the CPS Parent Brochure (printed back-to-back in English and Spanish) are available. Please contact [Claudia Angel](#) for copies.

## Heatstroke Prevention - National Public Awareness Day, July 31, 2018

### Issue

Heatstroke is one of the leading causes of non-crash-related fatalities among children. Vehicular heatstroke occurs when a child is left in a hot vehicle. The child's temperature rises in a quick and deadly manner. Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104 degrees and the thermoregulatory system is overwhelmed. A core body temperature of about 107 degrees is lethal. Unfortunately, even responsible parents can forget a child in the back seat. Whether you are a parent, caregiver, or bystander, it is vitally important to understand children are more vulnerable to heatstroke than adults. This issue has been a growing concern, and both Golden Gate Weather Service and Kids And Cars has been tracking this information nationally for 20 years.

## Data

The source for this data is [Jan Null, CCM, Department of Meteorology and Climate Science, San Jose State University](#).

### Total number of US pediatric vehicular heatstroke deaths

(Jan. 1- May 23) 2018	2017	1998 - present
7	42	749

The average number of United States child heatstroke fatalities per year since 1998 is **37**.

The children that have died from vehicular heatstroke in the United States (1998-October 2016) have ranged in age from 5 days to 14 years. More than half of the deaths are children under two years of age. Below are the percentage of total (695) deaths (and the number of deaths).

- < 1-year old = 32% (225)
- 1-year old = 22% (154)
- 2-years old = 20% (136)
- 3-years old = 13% (92)
- 4-years old = 6% (42)
- 5-years old = 3% (23)

An examination of media reports about the 700 pediatric vehicular heatstroke deaths for a 19-year period (1998 through 2017) shows the following circumstances:

- 54% - child "forgotten" by caregiver (400 children)
- 27% - child playing in unattended vehicle (200)
- 18% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult (137)
- 1% - circumstances unknown (5)

## Laws

In California, Kaitlyn's Law was passed in 2002, named after 6-month old Kaitlyn Marie Russell who died as a result of being left in a vehicle by a caregiver.

### [California Vehicle Code 15620 – aka Kaitlyn's Law](#)

(a) A parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child who is 6 years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being subject to the supervision of a person who is 12 years of age or older, under either of the following circumstances:

- (1) Where there are conditions that present a significant risk to the child's health or safety.
- (2) When the vehicle's engine is running or the vehicle's keys are in the ignition, or both.

A violation of Kaitlyn's law has the same results as getting a child passenger safety ticket, a fine of close to \$500 and a point on the violator's driving record.

## Prevention Tips/Resources/Websites

The organizational links listed below offer prevention information and materials on heatstroke education, and guidance if someone sees a child alone in a vehicle.

[National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) - All child endangerment issues related to CPS from NHTSA.

- Look before you lock. Make it a habit to look before you lock, and try these [tips to avoid putting children at risk of heatstroke](#).
- Keep your vehicle locked and keep your keys out of reach; nearly 3 in 10 heatstroke deaths happen when an unattended child gains access to a vehicle.
- TAKE ACTION if you notice a child alone in a car! Protecting children is everyone's business—learn [what to do if you see a child alone in a car](#).

## [Safe Kids Worldwide](#)

### [KidsAndCars](#)

[Department of Meteorology and Climate Science, San Jose State University](#)

## Media Outreach Ideas for July 31, 2018

### [KidsAndCars News Stories](#)

#### Tweets – Safe Kids

- In just 10 minutes, a car's temperature can increase by 19 degrees – and it continues to rise ([You Tube Video](#)). #heatstroke
- 10 minutes is all it takes for a car to reach deadly temperatures for a child inside. [Safe Kids Heatstroke](#). #heatstroke
- Heatstroke can happen to anyone, anywhere. [Safe Kids – Take Action to Prevent Heatstroke](#).

Tip: Make sure to keep your car locked when you are not in it so kids do not get in on their own. #heatstroke

## We are here to support you!

Please contact VOSP staff if you have any CPS Technician Training requests or questions, need CPS educational materials, or want to be on the list for future VOSP e-Newsletters.

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If you have any CPS programmatic questions, please contact [Whitney Braziel](#), the Office of Traffic Safety Occupant Protection and CPS State Coordinator, at (916) 509-3015.

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