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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Jan. 1- May 23) 2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>1998 - present</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>749</td>
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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 Kaityln’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 ([YouTube Video](https://www.youtube.com)). #heatstroke
- 10 minutes is all it takes for a car to reach deadly temperatures for a child inside. [Safe Kids Heatstroke](https://www.safekids.org) #heatstroke
- Heatstroke can happen to anyone, anywhere. [Safe Kids – Take Action to Prevent Heatstroke](https://www.safekids.org)

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](mailto:whitney.braziel@cdot.ca.gov), the Office of Traffic Safety Occupant Protection and CPS State Coordinator, at (916) 509-3015.

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