



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Don't Leave Kids in Hot Cars

Boise – Now that summer temperatures are setting in around the valley, Boise Police and Boise's local Children's Hospital have an important message for parents and child caregivers: It's dangerous to leave children alone in hot cars.

Boise Police and physicians from St. Luke's Children's Hospital say leaving children unattended in a hot car may result in tragedy, as children are more susceptible to heat related injuries. Officers want to remind adults, leaving a child unattended in a vehicle may also be criminal.

"Many parents or caregivers who leave children in cars say they didn't mean to, or didn't know it could hurt the child," says Det. Angie Munson of the Boise Police Department's Special Victims Unit. "We want to prevent any kind of injury to a child. Parents and caregivers need to know this is dangerous for kids, that's why it's a crime."

"Temperatures inside a car can often soar above 120 degrees in a short-period of time," said Dr. Kenny Bramwell, a pediatric emergency specialist at St. Luke's Boise. "Hot cars pose a greater danger for children because a child's core body temperature increases three to five times faster than adults. Such a rapid increase can cause permanent neurological damage or even death."

During a news briefing at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center on Thursday, Det. Munson used an infrared laser thermometer to test the temperature inside a parked vehicle. At 10:10 a.m., with an air temperature outside of approx. 75 degrees, after being parked in the sun for approx 15 minutes, the temperature inside the car read 107 degrees. Approx. 90 seconds later, the temperature inside the car read 108 degrees. The demonstration illustrated how quickly the inside of a parked car can heat up to dangerously high temperatures.

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Police Response: Boise Police will respond Code 3 (lights and sirens) to a call of a child left in a vehicle because of the possibility of injury to the child. Typically, Boise Police respond to about ten calls such calls each summer. One case in Boise in 2003 was fatal for the child. To date this summer, Boise Police have not been called to check on a child left in a hot car, but calls have been reported elsewhere.

Possible Charges:

- Felony Injury to a Child - may be filed against anyone who leaves a child in a car and the child is injured.
- Misdemeanor Injury to a Child - may be charged if the child is left in a vehicle but not hurt.

Tips for Protecting Your Family:

- Never leave your child in an unattended car, even with the windows down.
- Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination, particularly when loading and unloading.
- Don't overlook sleeping infants.
- Make sure you check the temperature of the child safety seat surface and safety belt buckles before restraining your children in the car.
- Use a light covering to shade the seat of your parked car.
- Consider using windshield shades in front and back windows.
- Do not leave cars parked, unlocked, or unattended where children could crawl inside and remain there unnoticed.

The Hot Facts:

- An average 33 children died per year from 1998-2004 from heatstroke after being left unattended in a vehicle.
- On days when ambient temperatures exceeded 86°F, the internal temperatures of the vehicle quickly reached 134°F to 154°F

For more safety tips & info, log onto:

<http://www.usa.safekids.org/skbu/cars/nlyca.html>