First Responder “Roll Call” Talking Points

Local Information for Attendees

* Does your state have an “Unattended Child in Vehicle State Law”? Find out at <https://www.noheatstroke.org/legal.htm>
* Does your state have a “Good Samaritan Law regarding unattended children in vehicles? Find out at <http://noheatstroke.org/good_sam_laws.htm>
* How many reported “near misses” were there in your community? (That is, number of children who were left in a car but survived.) This is a great statistic to include when speaking with the media.

The Issue – Every Minute Matters

* Heatstroke, also known as hyperthermia, is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths for children.
* It occurs when the body isn’t able to cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels.
* Young children are particularly at risk as their bodies heat up three to five times faster than an adult.
* When a child’s internal temperature reaches 104 degrees, major organs begin to shut down. And when that child’s temperature climbs to 107 degrees, the child can die.
* A car can heat up 19 degrees in 10 minutes. And cracking a window doesn’t help. That’s why every minute matters when it comes to rescuing a child.
* Symptoms can quickly progress from flushed, dry skin and vomiting to seizures, organ failure and death.

Target Audiences

* First Responders – First responders have the deepest reach into their communities and can help empower bystanders to take action and call 911 if they see a child is unattended in a car.
* Local Citizens – Every person who walks through an apartment complex, grocery store, dry cleaners, bank or gas station parking lot needs to know about the dangers — and action required — if he or she sees a child unattended in a car.
* Parents – These types of tragedies can happen to anyone, and most involve loving, caring parents.
  + It’s easy to become distracted when you are a new parent and are sleep-deprived.
  + Heatstroke tragedies often happen when someone’s daily routine is changed or disrupted.

Key Statistics *provided by* [www.noheatstroke.org](http://www.noheatstroke.org) *(visit the site to obtain current statistics and*

*data)*

* Since 1998, more than 845 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when unattended in a vehicle.1
  + 54% - child forgotten by caregiver
  + 25% - child playing in unattended vehicle
  + 19% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult
  + 1% - unknown
* In the last two years, over 100 have died from heatstroke. Since 2015 there has been a gradual increase in annual deaths:
  + 2019 – 52 deaths
  + 2018 – 53 deaths (highest on record)
  + 2017 – 42 deaths
  + 2016 – 39 deaths
  + 2015 – 24 deaths
* Heatstroke deaths have been recorded every month of the year in nearly all 50 states.

Top Safety Tips

Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this preventable tragedy by remembering to **ACT**.

* **A: Avoid heatstroke-**related injury and death by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you’re not inside so kids don’t get in on their own.
* **C: Create reminders**. Keep a stuffed animal or other memento in your child’s car seat when it’s empty and move it to the front seat as a visual reminder when your child is in the back seat. Or place and secure your phone, briefcase, or purse in the back seat when traveling with your child.
* **T: Take action**. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

1. Null J. Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke Factsheet. Department of Meteorology and Climate Science, San Jose State University Website. Accessed February 2020. Available from: <http://noheatstroke.org/>