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 can’t cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels.
* In relation to cars, it happens when a person, or animal, is left alone in a car and as the car warms up, so too does the person or animal inside.
* Young children are particularly at risk, since their bodies heat up three to five times faster than an adult’s body.
* When a child’s internal temperature gets to 104 degrees, major organs begin to shut down. And when that child’s temperature reaches 107 degrees, the child can die.1
* Because of this, and because cars heat up so quickly – 19 degrees in 10 minutes – tragedies can happen faster than you think.1
* 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 Stats

* Since 1998, at least 906 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when unattended in a vehicle.1
	+ 53% - child forgotten by caregiver
	+ 26% - child gained access to an unattended vehicle
	+ 20% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult
	+ 1% - unknown

In the last two years, almost 50 children have died from heatstroke.

* + 2021 – 23 deaths
	+ 2020 – 24 deaths
	+ 2019 – 53 deaths
	+ 2018 – 53 deaths
	+ 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

* Heatstroke can happen anytime and anywhere.
* Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this very preventable tragedy.
* Safe Kids wants everyone 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.

**More Information**

* For more information, please contact Cass Herring at Safe Kids Worldwide at cherring@safekids.org.
* Visit [www.noheatstroke.org](http://www.noheatstroke.org) or [KidsandCars.org](https://www.kidsandcars.org/) to find the current fatality data and statistics for your social media.