General Talking Points

The Issue

* 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.

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.

Who Is Affected?

* These types of tragedies can happen to anyone, and most of the cases happen to loving, caring parents.
* It’s easy to become distracted when you are a new parent and are sleep-deprived or when your routine is disrupted.
* Data has shown that heatstroke tragedies happen more often when the daily routine is changed.

Program Partners

* Safe Kids supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) heatstroke education campaign and the increased national coordination on the issue.
* Safe Kids is a member of the NHTSA Heatstroke Partnership Working Group, comprised of likeminded allies, including the National Safety Council, Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, and KidAndCars.
* Safe Kids and its network of 400 coalitions across the nation, including police and fire departments, hospitals and doctors, government agencies, childcare centers and businesses, are helping to educate parents and caregivers about the dangers of leaving children alone in a car.

**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.