



News Release

Media Contact:
Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D
Vice President Public Relations
757-233-3825
Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com

SOARING HEAT CAN BE DEADLY FOR THOSE LEFT IN HOT CARS

Temperatures inside Car Can Climb About 20 Degrees Every Three Minutes

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (Wednesday, July 18, 2012) – As oppressive heat continues to rise in Virginia, AAA reminds motorists of the real dangers of leaving children, the elderly, pets or any living being that cannot help itself unattended in a car for any amount of time. “Think of your car just like your kitchen oven, where temperatures rise very quickly,” said Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that temperatures inside of a car can climb from 78 degrees to 100 degrees in just three minutes and to 125 degrees in 6-8 minutes. With temperatures rising at the rate of about 20 degrees every three minutes, it is easy to see how a seemingly quick stop can *very quickly* turn disastrous.”

Tragically, on average 38 children die in hot cars each year from heat-related deaths after being left inside motor vehicles. “It is critical that motorists are uncompromising on this issue and simply make a habit of never taking any chances by leaving children or others in hot cars. A minute or two can also easily turn into five to ten minutes if you run into a friend or there is a line at the check-out,” added Blumling.

NHTSA offers the following tips for motorists:

- Children’s bodies overheat easily, and infants and children under four years of age are among those at greatest risk for heat-related illness.
- Children’s bodies absorb more heat on a hot day than an adult and are also less able to lower their body heat by sweating, causing the body temperature to rise rapidly.
- When left in a hot vehicle, a young child’s body temperature may increase ***three to five times as quickly as an adult***. High body temperatures can cause permanent injury or even death.
- Vehicles heat up quickly, even with a window rolled down a couple of inches. If outside temperatures are in the low 80s, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels in only 10 minutes.
- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle, front and back, before locking the door and walking away.
- Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as: writing yourself a note and putting the note where you will see it when you leave the vehicle; placing your purse, briefcase or something else you need in the back seat so that you will have to check the back seat when you leave the vehicle; or keeping an object in the car seat, such as a stuffed toy. When the child is buckled in, place the object where the driver will notice it when he or she is leaving the vehicle.
- Symptoms of heatstroke vary but may include: red, hot, and moist or dry skin, no sweating, a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse, a throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, being grouchy, or acting strangely.
- If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call the police. If they are in distress due to heat, call 911 and get them out as quickly as possible.

In addition, AAA Tidewater Virginia offers the following helpful tips:

- Keep bottled water in your vehicle for all living beings including pets.
- Before entering a vehicle that has parked in high temperatures, open the vehicle’s door and let the interior cool for a few minutes.
- A sun shield can be used to cover the windshield to minimize heat build-up and to help protect the automobile’s interior.

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- Cover metal and plastic parts on safety belts and child safety seats to prevent burns.
- A properly working air conditioning system will also help motorists keep their cool in summer heat. If needed, have the air conditioning serviced by a qualified technician, using the refrigerant R-12 in older systems or R-134A in new or modified air conditioners. Do not use non-approved substitute refrigerants.
- Always have a fully charged cell phone with you if possible in order to call for help if the vehicle breaks down.

As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).

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