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Children's Safety: Vehicle Precautions

Avoid a preventable tragedy

As safe as your vehicle may feel to you, it can be very dangerous for a child. It's important to familiarize yourself with the hazards vehicles can pose.

Driveway Accidents

Thousands of children are injured every year after being hit by a vehicle backing up or parking. According to Safe Kids USA, about half of these children are between the ages of 1 and 4. To prevent the unthinkable, follow these guidelines:

- Before you start your car, walk around it and look for toys, pets or children in the vicinity.
- Back up very slowly and roll your window down to listen for children.
- Teach your children safe places to go when they see a moving vehicle – for example, the front yard or porch.
- Very young children should always be supervised outside.

Hot Weather

Safe Kids USA reports that more than 30 children die every year because they are left in a hot car. It's simple: Do not leave children in the car, no matter what the temperature. Even a mild day can become hot very quickly inside a closed car – even if the window is cracked open. A child's core body temperature rises three to five times faster than that of an adult, which can actually lead to death.

Another concern: San Francisco State University found that one-third of all children left in a closed, parked car were done so by accident. This may occur when an adult changes his or her driving routine or is so preoccupied that he or she temporarily forgets the child is in the car. Unfortunately, this mental lapse can have devastating consequences.

Remember these tips to keep children safe:

- If you ever see a child alone in a car, call 911.
- Place an item you will need (your cell phone, a handbag or jacket) in the backseat next to your child.
- Make a habit of checking the backseat before you lock your car.

Schedule Changes

If you know you will be changing your daily driving routine, put a note in the front seat or set an alarm on your cell phone to remind yourself that your child needs to be dropped off. Ask your sitter, day care facility or school to call you if your child has not shown up on time.

Car Entrapment

Your children may find your vehicle an attractive play spot. These suggestions may just save a child's life:

- Always lock your vehicle, including the trunk.
- Remind children that vehicles are not to be used to play in or around.
- Store keys/remote devices in areas out of reach of children.
- If your vehicle's trunk is equipped with an emergency trunk release, show your children where it is and how to operate it.
- If a child goes missing, check vehicles immediately.



Did you know...?

If you're driving an SUV or truck, remember that the blind spot behind your vehicle can be especially large. Use extra caution!