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## How Hot is Too Hot? Keep your Little Ones Safe This Summer

Sacramento, Calif. – With summer underway, the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) reminds parents and motorists to be cautious about leaving children in the car, even for a few minutes. A car's internal temperature can quickly rise above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, even on days as cool as 60 degrees, and can rapidly reach fatal temperatures, increasing as much as 20 degrees in as little as 10 minutes up to 45 degrees in an hour.

"Summer means more time on the road and more reasons to be distracted. Make sure those distractions don't turn into tragedy. Take every measure to reduce the risk of unattended children in vehicles," said Rhonda Craft, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. "It is so important that everyone take steps to safeguard their children by remaining alert and ensuring that no child is left unsupervised."

Babies and young children can sleep so quietly that we forget they are even there. Busy parents and caregivers can get confused over who gets the kids out of the car or think that the trip into the store will be so quick that it isn't worth it to disturb a child. Leaving a child alone in a car, however, can lead to serious injury or death from hyperthermia, or heatstroke. A young child's body can heat up five times faster than an adult's body.

These tragedies are completely preventable. OTS would like all parents and caregivers to take the following precautions this summer to prevent unnecessary tragedy:

**Look before you lock.** Make it a habit to look in the backseat before rushing off to the destination. Either put something of the child's on the seat next to you or put something you will need next to the child as a visual reminder that your child is with you. If someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine has been changed, check to make sure your child has arrived safely.

**Never leave a child alone in a car.** Understand the potential consequences of leaving your child unattended in a hot car, such as severe injury or death to the child, or being arrested. Be mindful that even if it is not that hot outside, it is almost always 20 degrees warmer inside the car.

**Take action if you notice a child unattended in a car.** Don't wait for more than a few minutes for the driver to return. Remember, temperatures can rise fast inside a vehicle. The warning signs of heatstroke include: red, hot, and moist or dry skin; no sweating; a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse; nausea; confusion; or acting strangely. If a child exhibits any of these signs after being in a hot vehicle, call 911 immediately. If water is available within reach, quickly spray the child with cool water or with a garden hose - NEVER an ice bath. Always stay with the child until help arrives.

For additional tips and information, please visit the OTS Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS](http://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS) or follow OTS on Twitter @OTS\_CA. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit [www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov).

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