Heatstroke Deaths of Children in Vehicles

**BY THE NUMBERS**  NHTSA (2012)

- **10** — the minutes it takes for a car to reach deadly temperatures on an 80 degree day
- **38** — the average number of children who die from vehicular heatstroke in the US each year
- **57** — the lowest known outside temperature at which heatstroke can occur

**BY CIRCUMSTANCE**  Guard (2005)

- Of those left in vehicles:
  - **27%** Playing in vehicle
  - **73%** Left in vehicle
  - **18%** Intentionally left in vehicle
  - **54%** Forgotten in vehicle

Boys accounted for:
- **3 in 5** left: deaths
- **3 in 4** playing: deaths

**BY AGE**  Guard (2005)

- **80%** of these deaths were children ages 2 and under
- **34%** <1 year
- **23%** 1 year
- **23%** 2 years
- **15%** 3 years
- **5%** ≥4 years

**Children ages:**
- ≤2: more likely to be left by a caregiver
- ≥3: more likely to be playing in the car

**TIPS**  NHTSA (2012)

- **Never** leave children in a vehicle unattended, even with the windows cracked, even “for a minute”
- **Always** check the backseat when exiting the vehicle (put your phone or your purse in the backseat to create a reminder system)
- **Always** keep vehicle doors and trunks locked and keys out of reach
- **Make** an agreement with your childcare provider to always call you when your child is absent
- **Call 911** if you see a child alone in a vehicle

For detailed sources and resources:  
ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org/publications/heatstrokeinfographic

For NHTSA’s Look Before You Lock Campaign:  
safecar.gov/parents/heat-involved.htm

www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org  
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By the numbers:
10: the minutes it takes for a car to reach deadly temperatures on an 80 degree day
38: the average number of children who die from vehicular heatstroke in the US each year
57: the lowest known outside temperature at which heatstroke can occur
(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2012)

By circumstance:
27% playing
73% left
  54% forgotten in vehicle
  27% intentionally left in vehicle
  18% unclear

Boys accounted for 3 in 5 left deaths and 3 in 4 playing deaths
(Guard & Gallagher, 2005)

By age:
34% <1 year
23% 1 year
23% 2 years
15% 3 years
5% ≥4 years

80% of these deaths were children ages 2 and under

Children ages:
≤2 were more likely to have been left by a caregiver
≥3 were more likely to have been playing in the car
(Guard & Gallagher, 2005)

Tips:
Never leave children in a vehicle unattended, even with the windows cracked, even “for a minute”
Always check the backseat when exiting the vehicle (put your phone or your purse in the backseat to create a reminder system)
Always keep vehicle doors and trunks locked and keys out of reach
Make an agreement with your childcare provider to always call you when your child is absent
Call 911 if you see a child alone in a vehicle
(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2012)

For NHTSA’s Look Before You Lock Campaign: http://safercar.gov/parents/heat-involved.htm

Sources: