

# “Look Before You Lock”

Strongsville Police Department

With tragic reports around the nation involving children left unattended in hot vehicles, it is important to remain alert to children and car safety. The U.S. Department of Transportation has indicated that heatstroke is the number one cause of vehicle-related deaths of children, outside of car crashes. There are many reasons why these events happen such as being distracted from a busy day or exhausted from lack of sleep and/or routines that may have changed.

To build awareness in our community, the Strongsville Police Department will be promoting a “Look Before You Lock” initiative. Officers who have been trained in child safety seat installation will now provide rearview mirror card hangers to those requesting seat installations. The card serves as a reminder to check the back seat when exiting the vehicle. The police department will also approach our local retailers of child safety seats. These retailers will be asked to display a rearview mirror card rack in the area where child seats are sold. Cards are also available at Police Department for anyone who would like to share the initiative with their loved ones.

Additionally, we have provided some helpful tips and information for recognizing heatstroke and keeping children safe. To review all resources, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Heatstroke Campaign.

Did you know?

- A child’s body heats up three to five times faster than an adult’s body.
- More than half of heatstroke deaths occurred when a distracted caregiver forgot a quiet child was in the vehicle.
- Creating reminders and habits is an effective way to ensure that a child is not forgotten in the vehicle.

The following are some reminders and habits that will help you “Look Before You Lock” when traveling with children:

- Always check the back seats of your vehicle before you lock it and walk away.
- Keep a stuffed animal or another 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.
- If someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine has been altered, always check that your child arrived safely.

If you do find a child left in a car alone, here are steps you can take to help:

- Don’t wait more than a few minutes for the driver to return. Contact the police to report the incident and request help.
- Don’t worry about getting involved in someone else’s business — protecting children is everyone’s business.
- “Good Samaritan” laws offer legal protection for those who offer assistance in an emergency.

If the child is not responsive or is in distress, immediately:

- Call 911.
- Get the child out of the car.
- Spray the child with cool water (do not place child in an ice bath)

If the child is responsive:

- Stay with the child until help arrives.
- Have someone else search for the driver or ask the facility to page them.

Please share this information to help build awareness and help keep children safe.

