

15 January 2018

Canberra Kids and Hot Cars Warning

With the warm weather well and truly upon us, the ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee and Kidsafe ACT today issued a warning to Canberrans about the dangers of leaving children in cars on hot days.

"It is timely to remind parents and caregivers to not leave children in cars over summer, as parked cars can reach dangerously high temperatures," Eric Chalmers, Kidsafe ACT Chief Executive said today. "The temperature inside a parked car can be more than 30°C hotter than outside the car. That means that on a 30°C Canberra summer day, the temperature inside the car can reach over 60°C, and the temperature rises quickly"

Tragically in the past children have died from being left alone in cars and recent media reports highlight that parents and caregivers are still ignoring warnings about the risks of serious heat related injuries or death to children who are left unattended in cars during hot weather.

All too often, the child is forgotten whilst the driver is under great stress. Always check for your children in the back when you get out of the car.

"Our message is clear: never leave children alone in cars, always take children with you." Ms Margaret Carmody, Chair of the ACT Children and Young people Death Review Committee said. "Children can quickly suffer dehydration and serious brain injury. In hot conditions children may suffer organ failure and die from heat exhaustion and dehydration if left alone in a hot car."

"Younger children are particularly vulnerable. Parents believe that it is easier to leave their child in the car while they pop to the supermarket or into the service station. However, young children quickly dehydrate and are at risk of suffering serious heat distress. Leaving the window down a few centimetres has little effect and only causes a slight decrease in temperature."

Ms Carmody said "When travelling with children in hot weather, parents and caregivers should ensure that children are provided with plenty of fluids and that windows be shielded to protect children from the sun. Children should never be left unattended in a car."

The Committee advises "that if you see a child left alone in car in the hot summer weather, call Triple Zero (000) immediately and Emergency services will provide advice on the action to take. If the car is unlocked, bystanders should open the doors and shield the windows from the sun until emergency services arrive."

Link to website childdeathcommittee@act.gov.au.

<http://www.kidsafeact.com.au/>

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ACT Children and Young people Death Review Committee and Kidsafe ACT

Media Release