



NEWS

CONTACT: Fran Clader
(916) 843-3310

Media Relations Office
601 N. 7th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2, 2010

10-23

CHP: DON'T FORGET THE KIDS IN THE CAR!

SACRAMENTO, CA – As the summer heat continues, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) has a warning for the motoring public: Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

“Vehicles heat up quickly, even with a window rolled down a couple of inches,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Even on a seemingly cool summer day, temperatures inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels within minutes.”

This year in the United States, according to statistics from the Department of Geosciences at San Francisco State University, there have been more than two dozen incidents involving children left alone in vehicles resulting in at least 26 fatalities; one of those deaths occurred in California in April involving a 7-month-old Antioch girl. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says heat stroke, a form of hyperthermia, is the leading cause of non-crash vehicle deaths for children under the age of 14.

“It only takes a few minutes for tragedy to occur,” added Commissioner Farrow. “If you see a child left unattended in a hot vehicle, call 911 immediately.”

California law prohibits anyone from leaving a child six years of age or younger unattended in a motor vehicle without the supervision of someone who is at least 12 years old. A violation of the “Unattended Child in a Motor Vehicle Act,” also known as “Kaitlyn’s Law,” will result in a fine; but more importantly, it could result in the permanent injury or death of a child.

“Kaitlyn’s Law” went into effect in California, January 1, 2002. The law is in memory of Kaitlyn Marie Russell, a 6-month-old baby, who died from hyperthermia after being left unattended in a parked vehicle 10 years ago.

In an effort to raise awareness for “Kaitlyn’s Law,” while remembering the children who have lost their lives as a result of being left unattended in a motor vehicle, “4 R Kids Sake,” a nationwide non-profit organization designates August as “Purple Ribbon Month.” In support of the campaign, a purple ribbon will fly from the antenna of all marked CHP patrol vehicles throughout the month of August.

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