



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 5, 2014**

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**As Utah and North Carolina Communities Mourn Tragic Losses Due to Heatstroke,  
We Remind All: It can happen to anyone.**

**June 5, 2014 – (Kansas City, MO)** – Unfortunately, we just learned of two more heatstroke deaths. One in Hurricane, Utah where an 11-month-old girl was unintentionally left in a car, and another in Statesville, North Carolina, where a 4-month-old baby passed on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Here are the stories from [Utah](#) and [North Carolina](#). These are the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> heatstroke deaths so far this year. Let's stop this trend.

We need your help in getting the word out about the dangers of heatstroke as well as the real possibility that people can forget a child. We've heard time and again from people that they would never forget their child. However, people to realize that this can happen to anyone.

About every 9 days in the United States a child dies alone in a hot car. In 2013, 44 innocent little children died across the US in this tragic, but totally preventable way. Between 1990 and 2013, 16 children died in Missouri, 8 in Kansas. \*

"These tragedies are absolutely heartbreaking, and a reminder for all of us to be aware of the dangers of leaving a child alone in a car," said Regina Weir, Safe Kids Metro KC program coordinator. "Many people are shocked to learn how hot the inside of a car can actually get. And cracking the window doesn't help. That's why Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this preventable tragedy by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute. Bystanders can also help by calling 911 if they see a child alone in a car. But over 50% of the time, the adult simply forgot the child was in the car."

"In 2012, a Lee's Summit, Missouri baby was the first child in the US to die of hyperthermia," said Weir. "In 2013, we had no local child heatstroke deaths, and we want to keep it that way for 2014."

It doesn't take much for a child to get overheated. Even with seemingly mild temperatures outside, the temperatures inside a car can rise 20 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. A child's body heats up three to five times faster than an adult's, making them more susceptible to heatstroke, and when it reaches 114 degrees, the child will die.

To help prevent these tragedies, Safe Kids Metro KC has been waging a local public awareness campaign. On Thursday, July 31, National Heatstroke Prevention Day, local health and safety advocates joined with representatives from Safe Kids Metro KC and Johnson County, KidsAndCars.org, MoDOT, KDOT, KC Scout, KCMO fire and police, KS Highway Patrol, Children's Mercy Hospital, Destination Safe and others, to help educate the metro area public about how to prevent these tragedies. General Motors provided a vehicle to demonstrate how hot the inside of a car can get, using an oversized thermometer provided by Safe Kids Worldwide. It reached 114 degrees in less than an hour, with the outside temperature just under 90 degrees. MoDOT has been running the message "Where's Baby?"

Look Before You Lock” on their electronic KC Scout highway signs across the state of Missouri. We’ve been contacting the local media to help spread the word in hopes that this does not happen to any Kansas City-area family this year.

Please help in any way that you can. Together, we can reduce the number of heatstroke deaths and near misses by remembering to ACT:

- **A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you’re not in it so kids don’t get in on their own.
- **C:** Create reminders by putting something on the backseat of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you’re not following your normal routine.
- **T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

To gain perspective on such a tragic incident, we ask that concerned citizens read “[Fatal Distraction: Forgetting a Child in the Backseat of a Car Is a Horrifying Mistake. Is It a Crime?](#)” by Gene Weingarten, Washington Post Staff Writer.

\*Current statistics on child heatstroke deaths can be found at [www.ggweather.com/heat](http://www.ggweather.com/heat).

Additional prevention information can be found at [www.safekids.org/heatstroke](http://www.safekids.org/heatstroke).

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#### **About Safe Kids Metro KC**

Safe Kids Metro KC (SKMKC) works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children. SKMKC is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. Throughout the world, almost 1 million children die of injuries each year, and every one of these tragedies is preventable. SKMKC was founded in 2004 and is led by Mother & Child Health Coalition.

#### **About the General Motors Foundation and Safe Kids Buckle Up**

Beginning in 1997, General Motors and the GM Foundation have served as Safe Kids Worldwide’s exclusive funding source for its Buckle Up program, a multifaceted national initiative, bringing motor vehicle safety messages to children and families through community and dealer partnerships. To date, more than 22.5 million people have been exposed to Safe Kids Worldwide events and community outreach efforts. Certified child passenger safety technicians working through Safe Kids coalitions have examined over 1.65 million child safety seats at over 85,000 events, and the program has donated over 600,000 seats to families in need.

**See photos below.**

**Right:** Regina Weir, Safe Kids Metro KC Coordinator, demonstrates how hot the inside of a car can get in less than an hour.



**Below:** Amber Rollins, KidsAndCars.org, shares information on how to avoid the tragedy of children dying in hot cars.



**Right:** Drop-off time at day care is a high-risk time for parents to forget their child. Safe Kids Metro KC is providing pledge cards for parents and day-care centers/ pre-schools to help them remember.

**Below:** Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock is the phrase to remember. KidsAndCars.org is providing stuffed animals "Lucky" and "Chance" to help parents remember there's a child in the car. They recommend parents keep the toy in the car seat until the child is in the seat, then place the toy in the front seat as a visual reminder that there's a child in the car.



**KIDS ARE DYING IN HOT CARS**  
The Truth About Heatstroke. It can happen to anyone.  
Don't let it happen to you!

**PROTECT YOUR CHILD:**

**Parent:** If I will be late dropping off my child,  
I will call my child's teacher within 10 (TEN) minutes of the usual arrival time and let you know.  
Parent ♥ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** If your child doesn't arrive on time for day care, and I don't hear from you,  
I will call you within 10 (TEN) minutes of the usual arrival time.  
Day Care Teacher/Director ♥ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents, please give a copy of this to your child's teacher,  
and keep this in your car as a reminder to ask yourself and other caregivers:  
**WHERE'S THE BABY? LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK!**



