**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email Address]**

**NHTSA Urges Families and Caregivers: *Once You Park, Stop, Look, Lock*.**

**[City, State]** — Vehicular heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related death for children 14 and younger in the United States. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) urges parents and caregivers to learn about and share critical information about the dangers of leaving children alone in hot cars. Help NHTSA spread the word: *Once You Park, Stop, Look, Lock*.

Since 1998, when safety advocates first began tracking, vehicular heatstroke has killed more than 1,000 children. On average, one child dies from heatstroke every 10 days in the United States from being left in a car or crawling into an unlocked vehicle. Tragically, every single one of these deaths could have been prevented.

Hot cars are deadly: Internal vehicle temperatures can rise quickly and become up to 50 degrees warmer than outside air temperatures. Because a child’s body temperature increases 3 to 5 times faster than an adult’s, even a cool day outside may still pose a threat to a child.

In 2024, 39 children died due to vehicular heatstroke, an increase from the 29 children who died in 2023. The death rate decreased in 2020, but has slowly increased over the past few years. On average, 37 children die each year as a result of vehicular heatstroke.

Toddlers and young children are also at risk of vehicular heatstroke, and they are more likely to climb into a vehicle without supervision. Children “gaining access” to a vehicle accounts for nearly one-quarter of hot car deaths. It is a parent or caregiver’s responsibility to teach children that the vehicle is not a playground, and playing in and around a car is dangerous.

“Parents and caregivers think this sort of tragedy could never happen to them,” said **[local official]**. “Sadly, ‘never’ does happen. Anyone is susceptible to forgetfulness. It doesn’t matter who is taking care of the child, what their background is, or where they come from: Routines are often upended. It is during these moments of hurriedness and change in routine that many of these tragedies occur. *Once You Park, Stop, Look, Lock*.”

NHTSA urges all parents and caregivers to take three simple steps to help prevent hot car deaths. First, when getting out of a car, make it a habit to check the entire vehicle, especially the back seat, EVERY time. Second, NEVER leave a child in a vehicle unattended, even for one minute. Finally, ALWAYS lock the car and put the keys out of reach.

For more information on vehicle heatstroke, what to do if you see a child trapped in a vehicle, and warning signs of heatstroke, visit [www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke](http://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke). For current data, visit [noheatstroke.org](file:///C:\Users\angela.astrup.ctr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\3D59GOJB\noheatstroke.org).

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