

## Safety in Summer Weather



As summer approaches one should not forget about the dangers that the heat of the season can introduce. Parents should never leave their children unattended in a vehicle for any reason. We encourage parents to put their children in the backseat. It is a good idea to put your purse, lunch, or briefcase in the rear of the vehicle as well. This way when you exit the car you remember to check the back seat. In the state of Oregon it is considered child neglect to, "Leave a child under the age of 10 unattended in or at any place for such a period of time as may likely endanger the health or welfare of child." Oregon Revised Statute 163.545. This is a Class A misdemeanor.

From 1998 to 2007, approximately 365 children-most of them aged three and younger died from heat stroke after being trapped in a car. Research conducted by San Francisco State University revealed that more than half of these children were accidentally left behind in a closed, parked car by parents or caregivers while nearly a third of these children were trapped while playing in a vehicle unattended. Sadly, one in five children who died were intentionally left in the vehicle by an adult.

Heat is more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a young child's core body temperature may increase three to five times faster than an adult. This could cause permanent injury or even death. The same consideration should be given to pets as well.

Some information in this article was obtained through the Washington Safety Restraint Coalition newsletter.