



PPD Spotlight on Crime Prevention Column

Kids and Heat Don't Mix

If you ever park outside during the summer months, you know that the car heats up quickly. Heat coming in through the windows is absorbed by the interior, and the glass acts as an insulator. Even with the windows cracked, temperatures inside the vehicle can raise to deadly extremes in a very short period of time.

Every year, children die in vehicles. Small children are not able to open doors or windows. Usually, they will get very quiet as the temperature rises inside the car and heat overcomes them, so there won't be any audible sign of distress. As noted above, cracking the windows does not help. It may relieve the pressure in the vehicle and keep windows from blowing out in the heat, but it does not prevent the temperature from rising inside the car. Leaving children inside a closed vehicle is dangerous, deadly and illegal.

Here are some tips to remember and share with others:

1. Teach your children not to play in and around cars.
2. Never leave your children unattended in or around cars.
3. Do not be afraid to tell parents or caregivers about the dangers when you see anyone leaving children unattended in a vehicle.
4. Call 911 if you see a child left unattended in a vehicle.
5. Keep your vehicles locked when you exit them so that children cannot get back into them without your knowledge.

To deal with hot cars, you should:

- always check car seats to be sure they aren't too hot before placing a child in one.
- park in the shade.
- use window tinting or sun shades.
- service your vehicle to keep oil changes fresh, belts checked, fluids full and batteries charged. This will hopefully keep you from getting stranded in the heat.

*This article was written using information gathered from the Prattville Police Department Administration Division, about.com, and kidsincars.org.