



Hot Cars

On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked car can be over 30° higher than the outside temperature. Unfortunately there is little that can be done to prevent the temperature from rising in a parked car. Even having the car window open makes minimal difference to the internal cabin temperature. For example having the window open by 2.5cm would only reduce the temperature by approximately 3°C¹.



As a parked car can get very hot quickly, it is important that you never leave children unattended in a car.

Dangers of Leaving Children in Cars

Leaving children unattended in the car, even for a short time, can be fatal. Here are some of the risks involved:

- Children do not tolerate heat as well as adults, and tend to feel the effects of heat much more rapidly.
- In a parked car the temperature and humidity rises, while the airflow decreases. This could lead to dehydration and other health risks.
- A child may also become distressed and try to get out of their restraint; this may also increase the risk of strangulation from the harness.

The Law

Under the Children and Community Services Act 2004, *Part 4 - Protection and care of children*. A person who has the care or control of a child and who leaves the child in a motor vehicle (as defined in the Road Traffic Act 1974) without proper supervision for such period or in such circumstances that:

- a) the child becomes or is likely to become emotionally distressed; or
- b) the child's health becomes or is likely to become permanently or temporarily impaired;

is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment for 5 years.

Reducing the Risks

- Never leave children unattended in a car.
- Plan to complete quick jobs when you don't have children with you.
- Seek service stations offering pay at the pump.
- Provide plenty of cool fluids – preferably water.
- Dress children accordingly, and check that the harness still fits the child correctly. Children wearing lightweight clothing may need their harness tightened.
- Use a visor or sunshade on car windows. Avoid using a hood on rearward facing restraints as this will decrease airflow around baby's head.
- Plan journeys for the cooler hours of the day.
- Seek shady areas to stop or park your car, to reduce the amount of the direct sunlight hitting your car.
- Ensure cars are locked and the keys are out of reach of children to prevent children gaining access to the car.
- Always check the car before you leave it.
- Cool your car down as much as possible before putting the child in the car.

For more information visit theunconventionaloven.com.au/

References:

Dadour I.R., Almanjahie I., Fowkes N.D., Keady G., Vijayan K. Temperature variations in a parked vehicle. *FORENSIC SCI INT* [Internet]. 2011 [cited 2016 February 23]; 207 (1-3):pp. 205-211. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2010.10.009>

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