

*For Immediate Release*August XX, 2019

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**Children, Pets and Hot Cars-A Deadly Combination**

As of the writing of this article, ten children have already died in 2019 as a result of being left in a hot car. While it is never a good idea to leave children or pets unattended in a car, it is especially deadly during this time of year. The internal temperature of your car can increase by 20 degrees in just ten minutes, even on a cloudy or overcast day. Last year, 52 children died after being left in hot cars. That's the highest total of vehicular heatstroke deaths in the last 21 years, according to [noheatstroke.org](http://noheatstroke.org/index.htm). The danger from high temperatures is particularly high for young children. Their bodies heat up three to five times faster than adults’ bodies, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Don’t assume that you will “just be a minute” and don’t want to go through the hassle of waking a sleeping child or unfastening a car seat or seat belt. Nothing should take precedence over your child’s safety. Take them with you when you exit the car!

Lately, there have been several reports of parents forgetting their children were in the back seat of the car. The hurried lifestyle of today’s families increases the chances of a parent or guardian driving right by a school or daycare facility in an effort to get to work on time. Don’t let your child become an innocent victim! Get in the habit of turning around and checking the back seat before you exit your car. It takes just a second and can make all the difference in the world.

It isn’t just children that are subjected to heat-related deaths in cars. Often pets meet the same fate. Hundreds of pets die each year from being left in a hot car. People forget to crack a window or believe they’re protecting their pet by sealing the car tight while they run into a store for 20 minutes. Unfortunately, the results are the same—and pets actually overheat quicker than humans. If the temperatures are hot enough, cracking a window will not make a difference. On an 85-degree day, the temperature inside a car can rise to approximately 119 degrees in 30 minutes. Now, add the fact that your pet is covered in fur and does not have the ability to sweat.

Do your pets really need to accompany you on your car ride? If not, leave them at home! If traveling with pets, make sure to plan ahead and find restaurants and/or hotels/motels that are pet friendly. Make sure you make enough stops to hydrate your pets and give them time to relieve themselves.

Remember, you cannot control the weather, you cannot guarantee you’ll be gone “just a minute,” and you cannot protect your loved ones from the heat if you are not present. Remember, hot car deaths are highly preventable! Don’t take chances with those you love!

More facts, figures and prevention tips are available through the National Weather Service website at http://bit.ly/2LJqypE.

Insert your Department name relies on brave men and women to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer firefighters to ensure that every call for help is answered. Men and women with almost every skill set are needed. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Insert your Department name at Insert website or call Insert your Dept. phone number.

There are volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer fire department for citizens willing to work hard. To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter and joining your local volunteer fire department, please visit [www.VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org).

*About the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (TFCA)
The TFCA provides leadership to career and volunteer Fire Chiefs, Chief Fire Officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The TN Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) also encourages the professional advancement of the fire service to ensure and maintain greater protection of life and property from fire and natural or man-made disasters. The TFCA’s mission is to provide leadership to career and volunteer chiefs, chief fire officers, and managers of Emergency Service Organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their professionalism and capabilities. More information about the TFCA is located at* [*www.tnfirechiefs.com*](http://www.tnfirechiefs.com) *.*

*About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)
The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 and partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. 19 departmental groups, consisting of 64 departments, were selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings. More information about the Tennessee VWS can be found at* [*www.VolunteerFireTN.org*](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org)*.*

*(Insert info about your department in similar format to above)*