



# An ounce of prevention...

Texas J-RAC Prevention and Education Committee Newsletter

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The Texas "J" Regional Advisory Council shall encourage and support the development of a comprehensive continuum of quality health care to be provided for all patients in Trauma Service Area "J". The Prevention & Education Committee shall encourage and support J-RAC participants endeavors to fully develop and implement the region wide trauma system in order to reduce the number of trauma incidents, preventable deaths, and reduce the severity of trauma-related disability, and to ensure that all trauma victims receive the best care possible.

## Never leave your child alone in a car

The Safe Kids Texas Heatstroke Task Force joins the community and family in mourning their loss of a 1-year-old girl who died Friday, May 17, in Dallas. If the child's death is confirmed to be due to heatstroke, this would be the second likely heatstroke death of a child in a car to occur in Texas during the last week and the fourth overall in the U. S. during 2013. To gain perspective on such a tragic incident, we ask that concerned citizens read:

["Fatal Distraction: Forgetting a Child in the Back seat of a Car Is a Horrifying Mistake. Is It a Crime?"](#) by Gene Weingarten, Washington Post Staff Writer.

Safe Kids Texas Heatstroke Task Force is working to ensure that no child is left alone in a car, not even for a minute. We're participating in an education and awareness program that provides posters and tip sheets at childcare centers, doctor's offices and hospitals and police and fire stations.

Since 1998, more than 550 children across the United States have died from heatstroke while unattended in cars. During 2012, a total of 32 children died of heatstroke in cars in the U. S., including 5 in Texas. You can help us spread the word to your community to stop these preventable tragedies. Additional prevention information can be found at [www.safekids.org/heatstroke](http://www.safekids.org/heatstroke), and statistics on child heatstroke deaths can be found at: [www.ggweather.com/heat](http://www.ggweather.com/heat).

## About Safe Kids Texas Heatstroke Task Force

Safe Kids Texas Heatstroke Task Force works to prevent child heatstroke deaths in cars. Its 162 members include health educators, law enforcement officers, nurses, child advocates and many others. Safe Kids Texas Heatstroke Task Force is sponsored by Safe Kids Worldwide, a global organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. Throughout the world, almost 1 million children die of injuries each year, and every one of these tragedies is preventable.

## About the General Motors Foundation and Safe Kids Buckle Up

Beginning in 1997, General Motors and the GM Foundation have served as Safe Kids Worldwide's exclusive funding source and helped build the Safe Kids Buckle Up program into a multifaceted national initiative, bringing motor vehicle safety messages to children and families through community and dealer partnerships. To date, more than 22 million people have been exposed to Safe Kids Worldwide events and community outreach efforts. Certified child passenger safety technicians working through Safe Kids coalitions have examined over 1.5 million child safety seats at over 80,000 events, and the program has donated over 550,000 seats to families in need.

Source: [Safekids Worldwide](http://Safekids Worldwide)

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## Heatstroke FAQ's

### The Issue

Heatstroke, also known as hyperthermia, is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths for children. It occurs when the body isn't able to cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels. Young children are particularly at risk as their body heats up three to five times faster than an adult's. When a child's internal temperature gets to 104 degrees, major organs begin to shut down. And when that child's temperature reaches 107 degrees, the child can die. Because of this, and because cars heat up so quickly – 19 degrees in 10 minutes – tragedies can happen faster than you think. Symptoms can quickly progress from flushed, dry skin and vomiting to seizures, organ failure and death.



### Key Stats

Since 1998, more than 550 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when unattended in a vehicle.

- 52% - child "forgotten" by caregiver
- 29% - child playing in unattended vehicle
- 18% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult
- In 2010, 49 children died from heatstroke.
- In 2011, one of the hottest years on record, 33 children died.
- In 2012, 32 children died.
- Heatstroke deaths have been recorded in 11 months of the year in nearly all 50 states.

There are a staggering number of near misses – children who were rescued before a fatality. Palm Beach County reported more than 500 near misses in one year alone. And if that many are happening in one county, can you imagine the number happening across the country?

### Safe Kids wants everyone to ACT

Heatstroke can happen anytime. Anywhere. We don't want to see this happen to any family. Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this very preventable tragedy.

- A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not in it so kids don't get in on their own.
- C:** Create reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you're not following your normal routine.
- T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

### Program Partners

Safe Kids supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) heatstroke education campaign and the increased national coordination on the issue. With the support of the GM Foundation, Safe Kids and its network of 600 coalitions and chapters across the nation, including police and fire departments, hospitals and doctors, government agencies, childcare centers and businesses, are helping to educate parents and caregivers about the grave dangers of leaving children alone in a car.

### Who Is Affected?

These types of tragedies can happen to anyone, and most of the cases are to loving, caring parents. It's easy to become distracted when you are a new parent and are sleep-deprived or when your routine is disrupted. Data has shown that heatstroke tragedies happen more often when the daily routine is changed.

Source: [Safekids Worldwide](#)

## It's more than a "fender bender"

### Odessa seeing high number of crashes

Seven a day.

That's how many automobile crashes occurred on average throughout the calendar year in Odessa in 2012, according to statistics provided by the Odessa Police Department. This year, so far, the city has had more than 1,000 crashes.

*(Excerpt from the Sunday, May 26, 2013 edition of the Odessa American Newspaper)*

### Crash Costs & Statistics

The highest price we pay for car crashes is in the loss of human lives, however society also bears the brunt of the many costs associated with motor vehicle accidents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says in 2010 that the cost of medical care and productivity losses associated with motor vehicle crash injuries was over \$99 billion, or nearly \$500, for each licensed driver in the United States. In addition, every 10 seconds an American is treated in an emergency department for crash-related injuries, based on data from 2005.

New findings from the Insurance Research Council's (IRC) 2011 Trends in Auto Injury Claims report indicate that insurance claim costs countrywide have recently increased, reversing previous trends of declining or relatively stable costs. Although injury claim severity (the average cost of injury claims) has been increasing steadily in the last several years, much of the increase has been offset by declining claim frequency, which produced relatively stable injury claim costs per insured vehicle. However, recent data indicate that claim frequency, on a countrywide basis, is no longer decreasing.

A report by the Automobile Association of America states that **according to the Federal Highway Administration, the per-person cost of traffic fatalities is \$3.2 million and \$68,170 for injuries.** AAA estimates the cost of traffic crashes to be \$166.7 billion. **Costs include medical, emergency services, police services, property damage, lost productivity, and quality of life.**

### Who Pays

Private insurers pay approximately 50% of all motor vehicle crash costs. Individual crash victims pay about 26%, while third parties such as uninvolved motorists delayed in traffic, charities and health care providers pay about 14%. Federal revenues account for 6%, while state and local municipalities pick up about 3%. **Overall, those not directly involved in crashes pay for nearly three-quarters of all crash costs, primarily through insurance premiums, taxes and travel delay.**

Source: [http://www.rmija.org/auto/traffic\\_safety/Cost\\_of\\_crashes.asp](http://www.rmija.org/auto/traffic_safety/Cost_of_crashes.asp)

Source: [http://www.oaoa.com/news/traffic\\_transportation/vehicle\\_accidents/article\\_c326bd9c-c4c7-11e2-99c1-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.oaoa.com/news/traffic_transportation/vehicle_accidents/article_c326bd9c-c4c7-11e2-99c1-0019bb30f31a.html)

## Simple Practices for Preventing Auto Accidents

### Recognize and reduce distractions

More than 90% of accidents are caused by some form of driver distraction. Accidents often happen at the instant someone stops paying attention. Checking your appearance in the rear-view mirror, reaching to answer your phone, trying to read directions, send a text message or even looking at another accident are just a few of the ways accidents occur. Multi-tasking while driving is not worth your life or anyone else's for that matter. If you need to make a phone call, have a snack, read directions, or send a text message, take an extra minute to do so with your car safely parked.

### Drive within the posted speed limit

Speed limits are in place for a reason – driving at safe speeds reduces accidents and saves lives. You should know the speed limits for your normal driving routes – to school, to work, and other places you frequently visit. Along with speed limits, it is important to factor in weather conditions. Driving the same speed as posted limits in pouring rain is not a good idea. Driving too fast reduces your reaction time. You may not be able to stop in time to avoid striking an object in the road, a young child, animal, or pedestrian. Make a conscious effort to drive within the posted speed limits at all times.

### Know when you shouldn't drive or let others drive

Never drive when you are impaired. Don't drive when you're drunk, excessively fatigued, or for any other reason unable to control your vehicle. The consequences of driving drunk – breaking the law, going to jail, paying a hefty fine, being killed or killing another person – are simply not worth the price of taking a taxi home or spending the night at a friend's house. Similarly, don't get into the car with a driver who should not be driving. As the saying goes, arrive alive. Don't drink and drive.

### Always wear your seatbelt

Seat belts don't prevent accidents, but they do prevent some injuries and they do save lives. There is no excuse for not taking a second to buckle up. People are ejected through windshields more often than you might think. Ejection always results in serious injury or more often, death. Seatbelts help keep you restrained in the vehicle upon collision and prevent injuries associated with being thrown through the windows during a collision or rollover. Safety advocates say that seat belts save 9,000 lives per year.

Source: <http://www.avvo.com/legal-guides/ugc/simple-practices-for-preventing-auto-accidents>

