

Heat Kills: If You Love 'em, Don't Leave 'em

Program Overview:

Heat Kills, If You Love 'em, Don't Leave 'em is a Public Safety Awareness Program to remind residents about the dangers of leaving children and animals in cars.

The program has a goal to not only raise awareness among residents but also to remind them not to leave children or pets in cars during the warm summer months. A simple reminder could make the difference in saving a life for parents who may have forgotten and pet owners who don't realize how quickly an animal can suffer heat stroke in a hot car.

At the core of the program is signage to serve as a reminder to parents/caregivers entering a store and for people who were afraid to call the police if they see a dog left in a vehicle. The signs come in a larger metal style for outdoor use and decal style for businesses to post inside their windows facing out.



Sign Description	Indiv. Cost
Large aluminum outdoor signs (18" x 24")	\$49.95
Pressure sensitive window stickers (12" x 18")	\$11.95
Magnetic signs (12"x12")	\$29.95
Magnetic bumper stickers (3"x4")	\$3.45
Magnetic bumper stickers (10"x3")	\$4.95

Program costs are generally covered by donations and if requested, the local municipality assists in mounting and setting signs at private business free of charge.

Facts:

- Generally when someone sees a child in a car, they call 911 or break a window, but with a dog they're not sure what they can do.
- Leaving a child in a hot car can lead to a Risk of Injury charge (anyone under 12 years of age cannot lawfully be left unattended in a public place), leaving a dog in a hot car can lead to a Cruelty to Animals charge.
- A car can heat up to over 100 degrees on an 80-degree day in just 10 minutes, sooner if in direct sun.
- According to data by experts on www.heatkills.org, children have died in cars with the temperature as low as 73 degrees. Basically the car becomes a greenhouse. At 70 degrees on a sunny day, after 30 minutes, the temperature inside a car is 104 degrees. After 60 minutes, it can reach 113 degrees.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data findings show when temperatures outside range from 80-100 degrees, the temperature inside a car parked in direct sunlight can quickly climb to between 130-172 degrees.
- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, it makes very little difference whether cars windows are closed or partially open. In both cases, a car's interior temperature can rise approximately 40 degrees within one hour, even if the exterior temperature is only 72 degrees.
- Studies prove the difference in interior temperature between a car with the windows fully closed, and a car with the windows cracked a few inches, is negligible. If the outside temperature is 70 degrees, in 10 minutes the temperature inside a car will be 89 degrees, within 30 minutes, it will be 104 degrees. With temps in the mid-80's, within 10 minutes the temp inside a car will be 104 degrees, and in 30 minutes – 119 degrees.
- Heatstroke can lead to permanent health impairment for both children and pets.

Background:

Although Connecticut historically has few cases of children dying after being left unattended, the issue made national headlines last year when 15-month-old Benjamin Seitz, of Ridgefield, died after his father left him in a hot car for hours. In recent years Connecticut has also seen an uptick in reports from people who see dogs in hot cars.

According to the website www.KidsandCars.org there were 39 documented cases of children who died of heatstroke in cars in 2016. A child's body heats up three to five times faster than an adult's body. A car can heat up 19 degrees in only 10 minutes, even despite a crack in the window.

National statistics show that 55 percent of children who die of heatstroke in cars are due to forgetfulness by a caregiver, 28 percent are due to a child getting into an unattended car and 13 percent are due to an adult intentionally leaving a child in a car.

Fairfield's Experience:

Fairfield launched the "Heat Kills" program in 2015 through a partnership with local State Representative Brenda Kupchick and police. Through efforts with animal control, 25 signs were posted around town and on private property.

In 2016, they focused on expansion and enforcement. Throughout the summer Rep. Kupchick and Fairfield police personally visited local businesses to request they help by posting a sign. To date there are currently nearly 100 signs posted including all town parking lots, train stations, Stop & Shops, Shop Rite, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, Home Depot and many other local businesses.