

# Consumer alert: As extreme high temperatures continue, DCP offers tips to protect children & pets from heat stroke in hot cars

Take precautions to keep children & pets safe, and never leave them unsupervised in hot cars

Submitted by the New York State Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection

For this week's "Tuesday's Tips," the Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection is warning New Yorkers of the danger children and pets face when left in hot cars.

As high temperatures are reaching record levels this summer, there is a real and severe danger when leaving children or pets unsupervised in a car even when temperatures don't "feel" hot. At 60 degrees outside – after just one hour – a closed car can get as hot as 105 degrees.

During this unprecedented hot weather, the division recommends exercising precaution and early intervention to help prevent illness and even fatal consequences if a child or an animal is left unattended for a period of time in a hot car.

"Extremely hot weather endangers children and pets left unintentionally in a hot car," Secretary of State Robert J. Rodriguez said. "I urge all New Yorkers to be careful and attentive when driving this summer with children or pets, as just a few moments alone in a hot car can risk a loved one's life. Please follow these important safety tips from the Division of Consumer Protection."

Mark J.F. Schroeder, com-



missioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles and chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, said, "Leaving children, vulnerable adults or pets in a car for even a short length of time with the windows cracked is dangerous. A car can heat up quickly even on a mildly hot day. I urge all parents and caregivers to find a way to remember to look in the back before you lock your car."

Unfortunately, multiple deaths have been reported after children and pets have been left in a hot vehicle. There is a real danger in extreme weather because heatstroke or deaths in cars occur most commonly when an

adult unintentionally forgets that a child or pet, who may be quiet or sleeping, is in a rear-facing seat. Along with these incidents, children can also gain unsupervised access to parked cars and get stuck inside, especially if child safety locks are on.

Tragically, 942 children have died nationwide due to pediatric vehicular heatstroke (PVH) since 1998. Ten of these were in New York state. According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), every year, many pets die from heat exhaustion because they are left in parked vehicles. In 2022 alone, 56 animals died due to heat-related deaths, and another

488 were rescued from the heat. Anyone found responsible for leaving a child or pet alone in a hot car could face criminal charges.

Follow these tips to prevent additional tragedies for you and your young ones:

### Safety Tips for Children

- ✓ Never leave a child in an unattended vehicle in the warm weather, not even with the windows slightly open or down, due to the risk of heatstroke (hyperthermia).

- ✓ If you see a child in a hot car, call 911 right away and follow their instructions. Emergency personnel are trained to respond.

- ✓ Teach children not to play in or around vehicles and to alert an adult when a friend is playing in a vehicle without supervision. Make sure children understand the dangers of trunk entrapment (suffocation, heatstroke, etc.).

- ✓ Place something you need, like keys, a purse or bag, or your cell phone, next to your child's car seat so you will remember to check the backseat before you lock the car. Alternatively, place a stuffed toy in your child's car seat when not in use and move the toy to the front passenger seat when your child is in his/her car seat as a reminder that your child is in the vehicle.

- ✓ Use drive-thru services whenever possible while driving with a child in a vehicle.

It is vital to recognize the symptoms of heatstroke in children. Symptoms include absence of sweat, confusion, disorientation, flushed skin, loss of alertness, unconsciousness or rapid/shallow breathing.

### Safety Tips for Pets

- ✓ Never leave a pet unattended in the car. Like children, dogs and other animals have a harder time staying cool, leaving them extremely vulnerable to heatstroke.

A car can overheat even when the window has been left cracked an inch or two. Parking in the shade or leaving water in the vehicle won't prevent your pet from overheating, either.

- ✓ According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), young, overweight or senior animals or those with short muzzles or thick or dark coats are most at risk for overheating.

- ✓ If you see a pet in a hot car, call 911 immediately.

- ✓ Recognize the symptoms of heatstroke in pets and take action if you see them. Symptoms include restlessness, heavy panting, vomiting, lethargy and lack of appetite or coordination.

## IN THE NEWS

### Wilson Lions Club Homemade Arts and Crafts Festival

Jerome P. Maillet, chairperson for this year's Lions Homemade Arts and Crafts Festival, announced this year's theme is "Handcrafted." The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, July 29-30, on the grounds of the Wilson Historical Society, 375 Lake St.

A wide range of professionally crafted items will be available for sale, including photographs, woodworks, corn hole boards, metal works, wreathes, jewelry, embroider items and other crafted items. There are different venues that will be represented. Maillet said this show will offer

strictly homemade and handcrafted works by local artisans.

Admission is free. In addition to the festival, there will be a "Diaper Derby" at 11 a.m. Saturday, with two categories of babies competing in the race for cash prizes (6-9-month-olds and 10-12-month-olds). Local community celebrities will judge. To register, contact Sarah White at 716-867-1840.

During the course of the weekend, there will also be a basket raffle inside the Barnum Building, a 50/50 split and a "Critter" display at 11 a.m. Sunday

Maillet went on to say that the proceeds from the entire weekend will be earmarked for the Lions Club fundraising efforts to help address community needs and issues, support its medical

loan closet and, most importantly, help with issued and supplies needed by the blind.

Food and snacks will be available for purchase at the festival. Vendor registration is ongoing. For further information, contact Vincent Marranca at 716-622-5796.

### ConnectLife, Shawnee Volunteer Fire Co. play host to Brandon Kupiec Memorial Blood Drive

The Kupiec family, along with ConnectLife and the Shawnee Volunteer Fire Co., will host a community blood drive honoring the memory of North Tonawanda native Brandon Kupiec. Brandon

died unexpectedly in 2013, at the young age of 20. His family holds this yearly event in his honor.

The event will take place from 1-7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 3, at Shawnee Volunteer Fire Co., 3747 Lockport Road. All donors will receive a free Buffalo Bills cooler, a prize raffle calendar, a coupon for a slice of Good Guys pizza, and a hot dog lunch/dinner.

A press release noted, "Since the age of 16, Brandon had been an avid blood donor. He knew the importance of blood donation. There is no substitute for blood; it has to be donated by one to give to another! We are asking the community to share in his memory by donating on his behalf. To date, we have collected over 1157 pints of blood."

In addition, there will be a bake

sale, a candle sale, and an adult beverage rig toss game, all supporting a welding scholarship in Brandon's name awarded to a local high school student who shares the gift of welding – one of Brandon's passions.

The press release noted, "Summer presents a difficult time to collect donations. However, the critical need for blood does not change. It's imperative that we keep a safe and adequate supply of blood for local hospitals to ensure the patients in our communities have what is needed."

"Currently there is an urgent need for blood donors, with only a one- to three-day supply at any given time."

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