

**City Council
CITY OF IMPERIAL
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
420 SOUTH IMPERIAL AVENUE
IMPERIAL, CA 92251**

September 24, 2015

To: City Council members, Mayor

Re: Purchase of signs warning of heat danger for children and animals in parked vehicles

On March 9, 2015 three mutilated puppies were found in a bag that was left in the Valley Plaza parking lot. The Justice for the Puppies committee was formed on March 17, 2015, in response to this tragic event. Initially, the committee's intention was to raise monies for a reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for this crime. The committee arranged for a bank to hold in trust any monies donated (a total of \$2000 to date) and also invited the investigator from the El Centro Police Department assigned to this case to make several presentations at our meetings. Reward posters were printed and posted online and throughout the Valley.

Although the individual responsible for this crime has not been identified, the committee continues to meet once every three weeks. The committee is made up of a small but diverse group of individuals from throughout the County, who are deeply concerned about the safety, care and treatment of animals. We are community stakeholders who have voted to continue on as a "committee" providing support to the Humane Society of Imperial County.

One of our first projects is to initiate a countywide campaign to warn people about the dangers of leaving **children and pets** in a parked vehicle. According to www.KidsAndCars.org, children have died from heatstroke in temperatures as low as 60 degrees. Considering that the weather rarely dips below 60° during the day, this a year round problem in our Desert Southwest.

Statistics provided by www.KidsAndCars.org indicate that in well over 50% of cases, the person responsible for the child's death unknowingly left them in the vehicle. Between 1990 and 2010, there were 51 child deaths in California attributed to heat stroke when left in a vehicle. Between 1998 and 2015, 654 children in the United States died from being inside hot cars – nine more from when we presented before the City of El Centro on July 7, 2015.* More than 87% of these children were three years and younger. California Vehicle Code 15620 makes it a crime to leave a child six years of age or less alone in a vehicle. Statistics for dog deaths have not been compiled - however, California has passed a law that makes it a crime to leave a dog in a hot vehicle. Penal Code 597.7 reads in part, "*No person shall leave or confine an animal in any unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal due to heat, cold, lack of adequate ventilation, or lack of food or water, or other circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause suffering, disability, or death to the animal.*"

In San Diego County, Animal Advocate Paola Potts has persuaded local city governments and businesses to install more than 127 special warning signs in city municipalities and private businesses since 2013. Another 182 signs, including 90 through the County of San Diego, were installed at the beginning of

this summer in municipal parking lots, county parks and private lots. Mrs. Potts is part of Sol N Air, a tax exempt organization whose mission is to educate the public of the dangers of leaving children and pets in parked vehicles. Sol N Air makes these 12" by 24" signs available at a cost starting at \$44.82 each.

The Justice for the Puppies committee is initiating this worthy campaign before our City Council. We aspire to present this exciting campaign before the other city councils, Imperial County Board of Supervisors, and private businesses in hopes that they too will install these warning signs. These signs may serve as a life saving measure for children and pets.

REQUEST:

1. It is respectfully requested the City Council of the City of El Centro approve the purchase of a minimum of 12 Warning Signs that **Heat Kills or Injures Children and Pets** to be placed in city municipal parks, parking lots and downtown parking
2. These signs may be purchased through Sol N Air, San Diego at \$44.95 per sign. Signs can be purchased directly from Omni Graphics, which is the company out of San Diego that Sol N Air uses.
3. The City of El Centro may use their own procurement process if needed, at which Sol N Air provides the graphics at no cost.

Respectfully Submitted,



Trish Petree
Committee Chair
Justice for the Puppies

* On July 7, 2015 the City of El Centro Council Members unanimously approved the purchase of ten Heat Warning signs.

- Attachments: Warning Sign
Statistics Information
Article "Woman On A Mission to Save Kids, Dogs"
Sign Specifications & Costs
Child Vehicular Heat Stroke Fact Sheet, Kids and Cars.org
Article "Look Before You Lock Campaign"
Article "Committee Looking To Spread Awareness on Dangers of Heat"

Cc: City Manager
City Clerk

WARNING

HEAT

KILLS OR INJURES CHILDREN AND PETS



IN PARKED VEHICLES

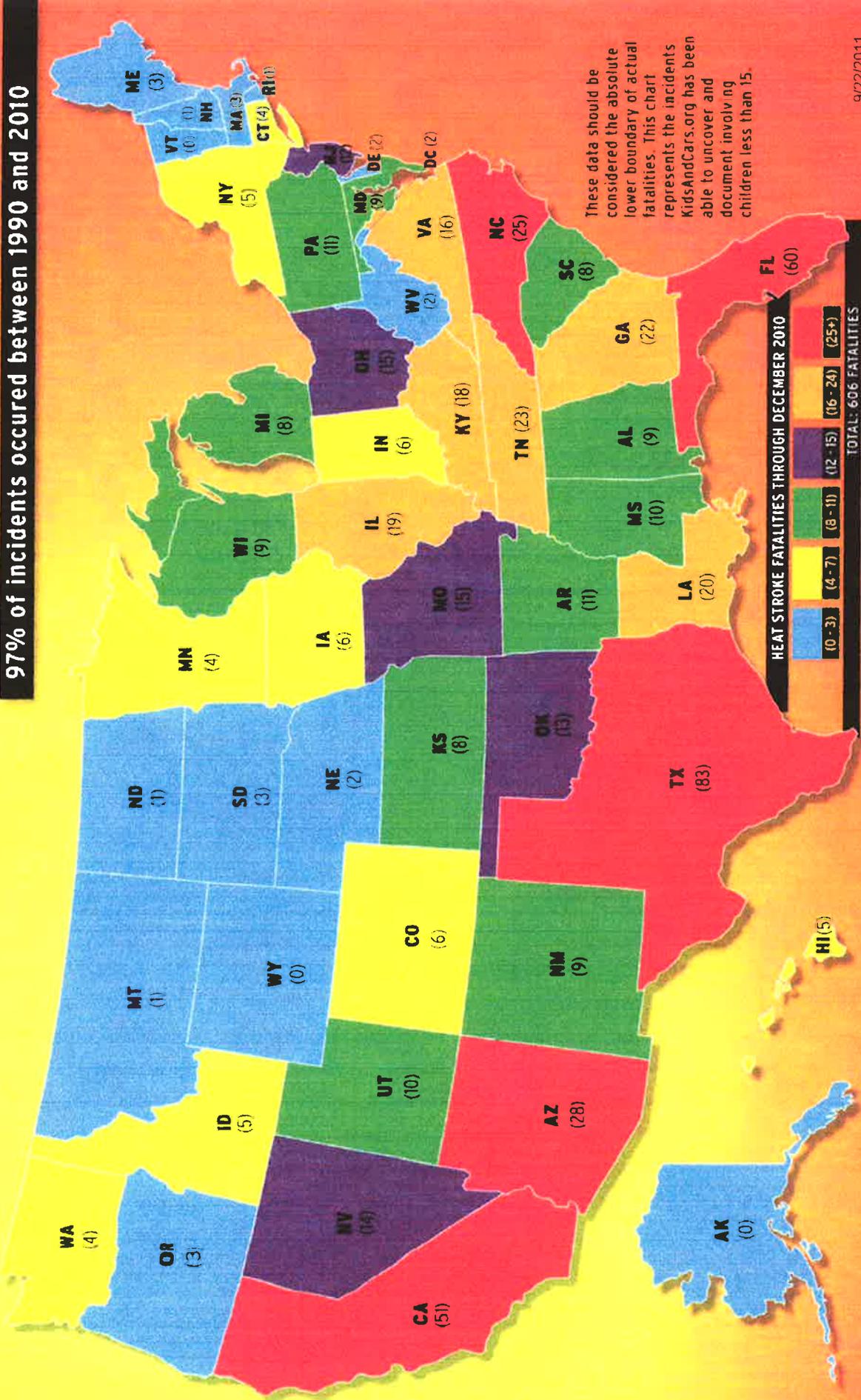
WITH WINDOWS PARTIALLY OPEN
EVEN IN MILD TEMPERATURES LESS THAN 70° F

Fine & Imprisonment
California Vehicle Code § 15620
California Penal Code § 597.7

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
CALL 911

U.S. Child Vehicular Heat Stroke Fatalities

97% of incidents occurred between 1990 and 2010



These data should be considered the absolute lower boundary of actual fatalities. This chart represents the incidents KidsAndCars.org has been able to uncover and document involving children less than 15.

HEAT STROKE FATALITIES THROUGH DECEMBER 2010

0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 24	25+
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TOTAL: 606 FATALITIES

9/22/2011

KIDS AND CARS.ORG

LOVE THEM, PROTECT THEM
www.KidsAndCars.org

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Trying to protect dogs from dying in cars

Escondido woman on a mission to save children, dogs from heatstroke

By David Garrick | 2:35 p.m. Nov. 15, 2013



Paola Potts holds one of her signs and her Chihuahua Guido. CHARLIE

NEUMAN • U-T

Paola Potts holds one of her signs and her Chihuahua Guido. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

ESCONDIDO — Momentum continues to build behind an Escondido woman's countywide campaign to warn people about the dangers of leaving dogs and children inside parked cars when the weather's warm.

Paola Potts delivered 75 special warning signs this week to officials in Escondido and Lemon Grove that will soon be installed in parking lots throughout those two cities.

Meanwhile, Encinitas officials say they'll revise their sign ordinance early next year to allow similar signs to be installed there.

The new signs come about six months after Ace Parking installed warning signs created by Potts in all 17 of its San Diego parking lots. Shortly after that, the Escondido Salvation Army put 10 signs in its parking lots.

"It started when I wanted to save one dog, but it's clear there are a lot of people who feel the same way I do," said Potts, who has found sponsors to pay for each of the roughly \$50 signs. "My goal is to have every city in San Diego County put up signs, and then to go farther."

Despite frequent stories in the media about children and dogs dying of heatstroke when left unattended inside cars, Potts said many people are still unaware of the dangers.

A Stanford University study found that sunny days can make temperatures inside a parked car increase more than 30 degrees within half an hour. Most days in San Diego County, that kind of increase will push the mercury well above 100.

According to a national study by San Francisco State, more than 560 children — mostly infants and toddlers — have died from being left inside hot cars since 1998.

Statistics for dogs haven't been compiled. But several states, including California, have passed laws in recent years making it a crime to leave a dog in a hot car.

"People don't understand," Potts said. "They feel that dogs are more resistant to heat than we are because they somehow think the panting solves the problem."

Her campaign was focused only on dogs when she launched it about two years ago, and most of the people who have sponsored warning signs are animal lovers. But Potts said young children are equally vulnerable to heat, so she decided to include them on the signs.

Phyllis Moore, a Del Cerro resident, said she immediately agreed to sponsor five signs when she heard about Potts' campaign last spring.

"It's so dangerous to leave kids or dogs in a car, but I still see people going into the grocery store and leaving them behind," she said. "It gets very, very warm."

Kath Rogers, another sponsor, said this region is especially dangerous because it's hot much of the year and sunny nearly every day.

"I'd like to see these signs everywhere in Southern California," said Rogers, head of San Diego's Animal Protection and Rescue League.

James Campbell, leader of East County's Animal Welfare Foundation, said his group recently sponsored 10 signs in Lemon Grove because they serve two purposes.

"The signs raise awareness of the problem, but they also let people know that they need to call someone immediately if they see a child or a dog inside a parked car on a sunny day," he said.

Campbell said Lemon Grove's 11 signs — Mayor Mary Sessom sponsored the 11th — will be installed at parks and the parking lots of the city's two largest shopping plazas.

Dan Young, Escondido's parks and open space superintendent, said he plans to install his city's 64 signs at nearly every city-owned property where cars are parked. That will include the library, City Hall, the East Valley Community Center and many parks.

"We don't want to have sign pollution any place, but we'll use our best judgment," he said.

Potts said her next steps include forming a nonprofit foundation and seeking grants for the signs. The cost per sign dropped from \$55 last spring to \$43 this fall because Potts was able to place a larger order.

In addition, Potts said she's pleased other groups are getting involved.

Jane Cartmill, leader of San Diego Animal Advocates, has lobbied Encinitas to allow warning signs next year, and said this week that she plans to approach Solana Beach officials soon.

In addition, her group recently printed 500 bumper stickers with warnings about leaving dogs and children in hot cars.

Cartmill praised Potts for her devotion and energy and said her signs are eye-catching but unobtrusive.

"This is an important issue," she said. "It's not just about the dogs that die, because the ones that survive suffer a great deal from being exposed to extreme heat."

Rick Sweeney
OmniGraphicsSD.com
260 West Douglas Ave
El Cajon, CA 92020

Signs:

Quality 10

12" by 24" (.063 aluminum)

Radius corners

Two holed drilled

Digitally printed on 3M ij 18-cv3 control tac

\$32.95 each

Hardware:

20 sets saddle brackets with one way bolts

20 adjustable stainless steel bands

(10 sets)

\$12.00 per set

Cost Summary

10 signs at \$32.95 each	\$329.50
10 sets hardware @ \$12.00	\$120.00
CA Sales Tax	\$35.96
Total	\$485.46

Child Vehicular Heat Stroke Fact Sheet:

Vehicular heat stroke is largely misunderstood by the general public. The majority of parents are misinformed and would like to believe that they could never “forget” their child in a vehicle. **The most dangerous mistake a parent or caregiver can make is to think leaving a child alone in a vehicle could never happen to them or their family.**

In well over 50% of these cases, the person responsible for the child’s death ***unknowingly*** left them in the vehicle. In most situations this happens to the most loving, caring and protective parents. It has happened to a teacher, dentist, social worker, police officer, nurse, clergyman, soldier, and even a rocket scientist. It can happen to anyone...

The Greenhouse Effect in Vehicles

- The inside of a vehicle heats up VERY quickly! Even with the windows cracked, the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees in minutes.
- Cracking the windows does not help slow the heating process OR decrease the maximum temperature
- 80% of the increase in temperature happens in the first 10 minutes
- Children have died from heatstroke in cars in temps as low as 60 degrees.

Contributing Factors

- A child’s body overheats 3-5 times faster than an adult body.
- Change in normal daily routine, lack of sleep, stress, fatigue, distractions, hormone changes, worry... symptoms that ALL new parents experience!
- Rear-facing car seats look the same whether there is a baby in it or not.
- Children, especially babies, often fall asleep in their rear-facing child safety seats; becoming quiet, unobtrusive little passengers.

Memory (Competing Brain Systems)

- Prospective Memory: processed by 2 brain structures
 1. **Hippocampus**, stores new information, the ‘here and now’ (processes that a child is in the car)
 2. **Prefrontal Cortex**, enables us to plan future, accounting for a change in routine (processes route, including to go to daycare rather than straight to work)
- Habit memory: forms subconsciously through repeated activities like riding a bike
 - **Basal Ganglia** – stores habit memories (driving to/from work daily), enables auto-pilot

What causes a parent to misremember? The basal ganglia takes over and suppresses the prefrontal cortex. The brain is on auto-pilot, doing what it would do on any given day, not accounting for changes in routine. Memory specialists note that the basal ganglia is much more likely to take over when someone is fatigued.

“Parents lose awareness that their children are in their cars. Tragically, these parents report that they had pictures of their child on their desks, they talked about their child, and even left work on time to pick up their child from daycare.” (Dr. David Diamond, Neuroscientist, University of South Florida)

Statistics

The average number of U.S. child vehicular heat stroke deaths is **37** per year. (*one every 9 days*)

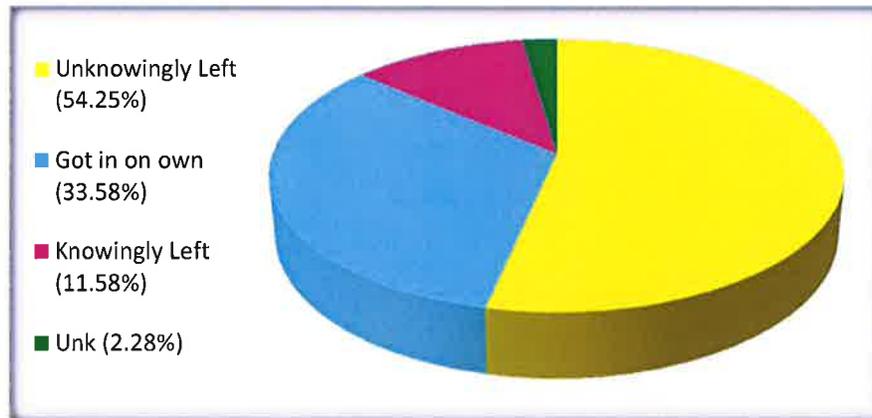
U.S. Child Vehicular Heat Stroke Deaths by Year (1991-2013)																
1991-99	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
156	35	39	31	43	39	47	29	36	43	33	49	33	34	44	32	724

Data Source: KidsAndCars.org

(statistics by state, county or city available upon request)

Circumstances

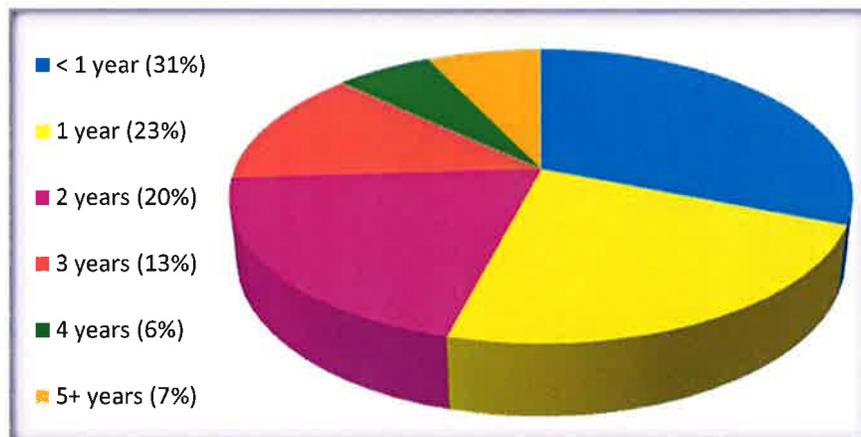
In an overwhelming majority of child vehicular heatstroke deaths, it was a loving, responsible parent that unknowingly left the child.



Age of Victims

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of children who have died from vehicular heat stroke are age 3 and younger.

Fifty-four percent (54%) of heat stroke deaths in vehicles involve children **age one and younger**. Rear-facing child safety seats do not look any different to the driver if they are occupied or empty, which can cause a parent to think the child is no longer in the car with them.



Prevention / Safety Tips

KidsAndCars.org believes the solution to these preventable tragedies is a combination of education and technology. KidsAndCars.org would like all vehicles to come equipped with a system that would alert a driver if a child has been left in the vehicle. Below are some simple tips parents and caregivers can follow to prevent heat stroke tragedies.

- Never leave children alone in or around cars; not even for a minute.
- **“Look Before You Lock”** - Get in the habit of always opening the back door to check the back seat before leaving your vehicle. Make sure no child has been left behind.
- Create a reminder to check the back seat.
 - Put something you'll need like your cell phone, handbag, employee ID or brief case, etc., in the back seat so that you have to open the back door to retrieve that item every time you park.
 - Keep a large stuffed animal in the child's car seat. When the child is placed in the car seat, put the stuffed animal in the front passenger seat. It's a visual reminder that the child is in the back seat.
- Make sure you have a strict policy in place with your childcare provider about daycare drop-off. Everyone involved in the care of your child should always be aware of their whereabouts. If your child will not be attending daycare as scheduled, it is the parent's responsibility to call and inform the childcare provider. If your child does not show up as scheduled; and they have not received a call from the parent, the childcare provider pledges to contact you immediately to ensure the safety of your child. (this is very similar to the 'absence-line' used by most elementary, middle and high schools)
- Keep vehicles locked at all times, even in driveways or garages. Ask home visitors, child care providers and neighbors to do the same.
- Keep car keys and remote openers out of reach of children.
- If a child goes missing, immediately check the inside passenger compartments and trunks of all vehicles in the area very carefully, even if they are locked. A child may lock the car doors after entering a vehicle on their own, but may not be able to unlock them.
- If you see a child alone in a vehicle, get involved. Call 911 immediately. If the child seems hot or sick, get them out of the vehicle as quickly as possible.
- Be especially careful during busy times, schedule changes and periods of crisis or holidays. This is when many tragedies occur.
- Use drive-thru services when available (restaurants, banks, pharmacies, dry cleaners, etc.) and pay for gas at the pump.

Please share these important safety tips with your childcare providers, teachers, relatives, friends, family and neighbors... It could save a life!

'Look Before You Lock' campaign Campaign aims to prevent vehicle-related childhood heatstroke deaths



El Centro Fire Engineer Jason Bandaruk talks about the dangers of leaving a child in a vehicle unattended during the summer on Friday at El Centro Fire Station No. 3. JULIO MORALES PHOTO

Posted: Saturday, June 13, 2015 12:20 am | Updated: 6:28 pm, Sat Jun 13, 2015. By JULIO MORALES Staff Writer, Copy Editor

Summer's arrival comes with the increased risk of children getting heatstroke, and local public health and safety officials are reminding the community to never leave a child unattended in a vehicle as part of their "Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock" campaign.

More than half of children's heat-related deaths result from children being accidentally left in vehicles, and about 29 percent of those occur when children climb into a vehicle without anyone's knowledge, said El Centro Fire Department Battalion Chief Cedric Ceseña.

Nor do heat-related children's deaths occur more frequently among one group of society than another, he said.

"These things can happen to the best parents," Ceseña said.

Outside of car crashes, heatstroke is the No. 1 killer of children, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

In an effort to combat the alarming trend, the NHTSB launched the "Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock" campaign three years ago to help remind parents and caregivers to never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even if the car is running and the air conditioner is on.

Nationwide, about 37 children die from heatstroke from being left in a vehicle each year, said Jason Bandaruk, ECFD fire engineer.

So far this year, there have been four heatstroke deaths resulting from children being left in a car unattended, he said. Last summer the ECFD had responded to more than one report of a child being left in a car unattended, he said.

To further help protect a child's life, parents and caregivers should become aware of the warning signs and symptoms associated with heatstroke, which include: red, hot and moist or dry skin, no sweating, nausea, vomiting, strange behavior, as well as an irregular pulse, which can be rapid or weak, Bandaruk said.

If a child exhibits any of the signs of heatstroke, public safety officials recommend cooling the child by spraying them with cool water or with a garden hose. Never give a child a ice bath. And immediately call 911, he said.

As part of the local campaign effort, local public health officials will be distributing posters to local pediatricians and health care providers with information about the risks associated with leaving a child unattended in a car during the summer. Local radio stations will also be sharing related information as well.

The temperature of a vehicle's interior can skyrocket rapidly, reaching 160 to 170 degrees within 20 minutes after turning off the air conditioner, said Christopher Herring, Imperial County Public Health Department EMS manager.

A child's temperature can also rise five times faster than that of an adult, he said.

There are also risks associated with leaving children unattended in a running car with its air conditioner on because of the possibility a child may attempt to put the car into gear.

On Friday, local officials gathered at ECFD Station No. 3 to share tips on how to avoid leaving a child unattended in a vehicle.

Some recommendations include making it a habit to look in the backseat every time one exits their car, and always lock the car and leave the keys out of reach. Also, placing one's briefcase or work accessories in the back seat next to the child so that parents are forced to open the back door to retrieve the items and observe the child's presence.

Local officials also recommended having child care providers contact parents when a child is absent to confirm that a child has not been forgotten in a vehicle's back seat. A smartphone app, called Safercar, is also available for Apple and Android devices to help prevent parents from leaving a child in a car.

Lastly, leaving a child unattended in a car is a crime, said California Highway Patrol Public Information Officer Germán Lazarin.

"If you leave a child in a vehicle you can be charged with manslaughter or child endangerment," he said.

Staff Writer, Copy Editor Julio Morales can be reached at 760-337-3415 or at jmorales@ivpressonline.com



Committee looking to spread awareness on dangers of heat

By ARTURO BOJORQUEZ Adelante Valle Editor | Posted: Thursday, July 9, 2015 1:00 am

A few weeks ago, a Brawley woman was arrested for animal cruelty in El Cajon just outside the court's parking lot after leaving her dog inside her vehicle for several hours.

Last week, a Mexicali girl died after being left by her mother who accidentally left the child inside her car for 10 hours while working.

These and many other cases were reasons why a local organization decided to request authorities to install heat warning signs at public facilities in order to increase awareness about the risks that high temperatures can cause for children and pets being left alone inside automobiles.

Trish Petree, with the Justice for the Puppies Committee, introduced a petition before the El Centro City Council asking local officials to launch a campaign to warn residents about the dangers of high temperatures for both children and pets.

El Centro City Council members approved Tuesday night the installation of 10 of these warning signs within city limits for less than \$500.

Money for the signs will come from the Community Sponsorship Funds, according to city documents.

The signs will read, "Heat kills or injures children and pets."

Originally, Justice for Puppies requested at least a dozen of 24-by-12-inch signs like the ones that have been installed in San Diego.

Animal advocate Paola Potts asked local and county government agencies in San Diego to install 127 special warning signs in 2013.