



POLICE

WILTON MANORS

Paul O'Connell
Chief of Police

Officer Jennifer Bickhardt
Public Information Officer
954-390-2150
954-866-5848 (Cell)
jbickhardt@wmpd.org

PRESS RELEASE

<p>NUMBER 2016-017</p>	<p>SUBJECT Baby/Pet On Board Safety Awareness Campaign</p>  <p>The graphic shows a car with a baby and a dog inside. A sun icon with a checkmark is on the left. Text reads: 'WARNING: The Florida sun is HOT! Always check for precious cargo before you go.' Logos for WMPD and other agencies are at the bottom.</p>	<p>DATE 06/08/16</p>
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Wilton Manors Police Department provides removable stickers for vehicle windows in an Effort Aimed to remind drivers their “Precious Cargo” is in a HOT vehicle and to Save the Lives of Children and Pets.

(Wilton Manors, FL)- There is no excuse to leave a baby, child, or pet in a hot, parked vehicle ever. The Wilton Manors Police Department (WMPD) cannot stress enough how dangerous it is to leave a young child or pet in a hot, parked vehicle. WMPD wants to educate the community about these dangers and how simple it can be to remember your “Precious Cargo” is on-board. As the temperatures begin to go up, sadly so do the number of children and pets who die after being left inside **hot** vehicles. Already in 2016 there have been 10 child vehicular heatstroke deaths nationwide. To help in educating and reminding you of your “Precious Cargo” Officers from WMPD will be providing informational pamphlets along with removable stickers for you to place on the inside of your vehicle’s window. Every time you enter and exit your vehicle you’ll be reminded by the sticker to check for your most valuable cargo (your child and/or pet that is). The informational pamphlets and stickers will be provided during parent drop-off and pick up at Wilton Manors Elementary School and Somerset Academy Village on the last day of school- June 9, 2016. They will also be available thereafter throughout the City of Wilton Manors at child and doggie daycares, animal hospitals, the Wilton Manors Library, and at WMPD.

WMPD wants to ensure your children and pet(s) are safe by reminding drivers not to leave loved ones inside a hot parked vehicle. The inside of a vehicle heats up VERY quickly! According to KidsandCars.org, a public safety awareness website for child safety, there have been **77** child vehicular heat stroke fatalities in the State of Florida between 1990 and 2015 (Please note: this should be considered an undercount of the actual number of child vehicular heat stroke fatalities due to no official state data collection systems) and nationwide, approximately 754 children have died from being left in a hot vehicle. Even with the windows cracked, the temperature inside a car can reach 120 to 125 degrees in minutes and 80% of the increase in temperature happens in the first 10 minutes. Cracking the windows does not help slow the heating process OR decrease the maximum temperature. It's everyone's responsibility in order to Prevent Child and Pet Heatstroke in Cars. Even great parents and pet owners can forget a child or pet in a vehicle, and caregivers who aren't used to driving children or pets are especially likely to forget. A change in a caregiver's normal routine is another risk factor. Unfortunately, heatstroke is one of the leading causes of death among children. Be sure to follow these three simple tips to prevent child and pet heatstroke in your car:

1. **Never Leave a Child or Pet Alone in a Car-** It's never Okay to leave a child or pet alone in a car, even for a few minutes, and even if the vehicle is on. Opening windows will not prevent heatstroke. Don't let kids and pets play in an unattended vehicle.

Florida State Statute 316.6135- Leaving children unattended or unsupervised in motor vehicles states that a parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child younger than 6 years of age may not leave the child unattended or unsupervised in a motor vehicle:

(a) For a period in excess of 15 minutes;

(b) For any period of time if the motor of the vehicle is running, the health of the child is in danger, or the child appears to be in distress.

Any person who violates this statute could commit a misdemeanor of the second degree, could be found guilty of a noncriminal traffic infraction, could be punished by a fine not less than \$50 and not more than \$500, could commit a felony of the third degree if leaving the child in the vehicle causes great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement to the child.

2. **Look Before You Lock-** Always check the back seats of your vehicle before you lock it and walk away. Keep a stuffed animal or other memento in your child's car seat when it's empty and move it to the front seat as a visual reminder when your child is in the back seat. If your Precious Cargo is your pet keep your pet's leash or toy in the front with you as a visual reminder when your pet is in the vehicle. If someone else is driving your child or pet, or your daily routine has been altered, always check that your child or pet arrived safely.
3. **Take Action if You See a Child or Pet Alone in a Car-** Don't wait more than a few minutes for the driver to return. Don't worry about getting involved in someone else's business—protecting children and pets is everyone's business. As of March 8, 2016 "Good Samaritan" laws in the state of Florida offer legal protection for those who offer assistance in an emergency. Under **Florida State Statute 768.139 (House Bill 131)** individuals can't be sued for breaking into a car to rescue unattended persons and animals, so long as they have first checked the vehicle is locked; called 9-1-1 / notified Law Enforcement before entering the vehicle or immediately after doing so; uses no more force than is necessary to break in; and remains with the person or animal until first-responders arrive.

WMPD urges you to **call 9-1-1** and **Say something** if you **See** a baby, child, pet, or anyone left in a hot, parked vehicle.

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