



# Kaitlyn's Law



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Did you know that it is illegal to leave a child under the age of six alone in a vehicle? State law mandates that any child left in a vehicle must have supervision from a person who is 12 years of age or older. Unfortunately, millions of children are left unsupervised in or around vehicles each year, and the results are often tragic.

## What is Kaitlyn's Law?

In the fall of 2001 the Governor of California signed into law Senate Bill 255, also known as *Kaitlyn's Law*. Named for Kaitlyn Russell, a six-month old who died after being left by a babysitter in a parked car for more than two hours, the law makes it illegal for a child to be left unattended in a motor vehicle. **California Vehicle Code 15620** states a parent, legal guardian or other person responsible for a child who is 6 years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being subject to the supervision of a person who is 12 years of age or older, under either of the following circumstances:

- Where there are conditions that present a significant risk to the child's health or safety.
- When the vehicle's engine is running or the vehicle's keys are in the ignition, or both.



### Dangers to Children Left Unattended in Cars Include:

- Heat Stroke
- Hypothermia
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Body Parts Crushed by Power Windows and Sunroofs
- Trunk Entrapment
- Abduction or Carjacking
- Runaway Vehicles
- Car Crashes
- Burns or Fires From Cigarette Lighter

### 2007 Nationwide Statistics

There have been 351 incidents, involving 451 children, resulting in 88 fatalities

*Fatalities by Type:*

- Back-overs - 48*
- Car Fires - 0*
- Hyperthermia - 14*
- Other - Strangulation - 1*
- Power Equipment - 0*
- Seat Belt Entanglement - 0*
- Struck by Vehicle - 18*
- Vehicle in Motion - 7*

## Safety Tips to Help Keep Children Safe:

- Never leave a child in a vehicle with the motor running or the key in the ignition.
- Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination.
- Keep a stuffed animal in your child's carseat when it's empty. When your child is in the car, place the stuffed animal on the front seat next to you as a visual reminder.
- When running errands with children, remain together in the car by utilizing businesses with drive-through services.
- Use your debit or credit card at the gas pump instead of paying inside.
- Ask grocery store clerks to load your bags into your vehicle and return the cart instead of leaving a child alone, even for an instant.
- Always lock your car, even in the garage or driveway. If a child is missing, immediately check the car including the trunk.
- Never leave keys within the reach of children.
- Teach children never to play in, on or around cars.
- Make it a habit to "look before you leave" before exiting any vehicle.
- Never let children ride or play in the cargo area, trunk or bed of any vehicle.
- If a child is locked inside a vehicle, get him or her out as quickly as possible. Call 9-1-1 for assistance if necessary. If the child appears hot or sick, call 9-1-1 immediately.



### For More Information

[www.4rkidssake.org](http://www.4rkidssake.org)  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)  
[www.harrisonshope.org](http://www.harrisonshope.org)  
[www.kidsandcars.org](http://www.kidsandcars.org)  
[www.ocfa.org](http://www.ocfa.org)  
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On a warm day, the temperature inside a parked car can reach as high as 140° in as little as two hours.

### *2002 Vehicle Heat Study*

Time elapsed and temperature rise:

*10 Minutes - 19°*  
*20 Minutes - 29°*  
*30 Minutes - 34°*  
*60 Minutes - 43°*  
*1 to 2 hours - 50°*