



## OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Phone: 970-336-7204 Fax: 970-352-0242  
1150 O St., P.O. Box 758, Greeley, CO 80632

## NEWS RELEASE

---

Date: 07/02/19

Contact: Jennifer Finch, 970-336-7203

### WELD COUNTY DHS URGES CITIZENS TO HELP PROTECT CHILDREN FROM HEATSTROKE

WELD COUNTY, CO — Rising temperatures have contributed to 13 child deaths so far this year in the United States as a result of heatstroke, which can happen when kids are left unattended in vehicles. Weld County Department of Human Services (DHS) reminds caregivers to never leave children alone in a vehicle, and if you see a child alone in a car, call 911.

Heatstroke, also known as hyperthermia, is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths for children. It occurs when the body can't cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels. Young children are particularly at risk, as their bodies heat up three to five times faster than an adult's. Since 1998, 808 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when left alone in a vehicle.

"Heatstroke can happen anytime, anywhere. We don't want to see this happen to any family," said Judy Griego, Weld County DHS Director. "We just experienced a near-miss in our own parking lot, so that was a wake-up call for all of us. That's why we're asking everyone to help protect kids from this very preventable tragedy by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute."

Together, we can cut down the number of deaths and near-misses by remembering to **ACT**.

- **A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not inside so kids don't get in on their own.
- **C:** Create reminders. 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. Or place and secure your phone, briefcase or purse in the back seat when traveling with your child.
- **T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

As part of its hot car awareness campaign, heatstroke tips and information will be posted on the Weld County Government Facebook page weekly. To learn more about child safety in Weld County, please visit [https://www.weldgov.com/departments/human\\_services/child\\_welfare/prevention\\_services/outreach](https://www.weldgov.com/departments/human_services/child_welfare/prevention_services/outreach).

###