

SUMMER IS THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME OF YEAR FOR UNATTENDED KIDS IN AND AROUND CARS

WASHINGTON, June 7 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- With the onset of summer, the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS) is teaming with XM Satellite Radio, the National WIC Association, local health clinics, automobile dealers, state highway safety offices, as well as others to remind parents to actively supervise their children in and around cars.

Each year hundreds of children suffer injuries or death from vehicles backing out of driveways, being trapped in hot vehicles or in car trunks, being strangled by power windows, in vehicles inadvertently put in motion by children moving the shift lever and similar types of incidents. ACTS is aware of at least 100 of these incidents in the U.S. and Canada this year.

"Active parental and caregiver supervision is the key to saving children's lives and preventing injuries," said ACTS president, Phil Haseltine. "It's important for parents to realize that one out of 10 motor vehicle-related child fatalities occur off the public streets, in places like driveways and parking lots," continued Haseltine. "A common thread in these tragedies is that they almost always involve an unattended or unsupervised child."

ACTS today announced the results of a first of its kind parent survey involving 900 parents of children ages 12 and younger. The survey found that:

- Most parents perceive the risks to unattended children in and around cars as low.
- Two thirds of parents thought it unlikely or very unlikely that a child in their neighborhood might die from the heat after being left alone in a car.
- Less than half (46%) thought it was likely that a child in their neighborhood might be hit by a car backing out of a driveway.
- 44 percent of parents surveyed have known someone whose child was hit by a car.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 parents (87%) strongly agreed that parents should do a better job of supervising their children in and around cars.

The survey also showed that most parents are taking the correct actions to protect their children in and around cars:

- On average, parents normally hold a child's hand in a parking lot until the child is at least 7 1/2 years old.
- Most parents require their children to be in a safety seat or booster seat until age 6 1/2.
- Nine out of 10 parents say they have never left a child under five alone in a car.
- Three out of five parents say the same about a child under 12.

"Our research shows that most parents do a pretty good job of supervising their children," said Haseltine. "But with the onset of summer, kids spend more time outdoors and temperatures rise quickly in enclosed vehicles. Parents and caregivers need to be vigilant and actively supervise children, particularly when they are in or around a motor vehicle."

The following tips can help keep children safe in and around motor vehicles:

- Observe - Walk completely around your car before getting in. Know where your children are and teach them to move away from a vehicle when it is started.
- Hold Hands - Most parents hold their child's hand around streets, driveways and parking lots until the child is at least 7 1/2 years old.
- Buckle Up - Set a good example and don't move the car until your children are properly restrained as well.
- Supervise - Nine out of 10 parents say they have never left a child under five alone in a car. But, they agree that children need more supervision.
- Know your choices - New safety technologies can help keep kids safer around cars. Pick the devices that are right for your family and try them before buying to make sure they meet your expectations.

This safety information will be shared with parents across the country through national partnerships with XM Satellite Radio, the National WIC Association, the National Automobile Dealers Association, Safe Kids Worldwide, the Governors Highway Safety Association and locally with Unity Health Care in Washington, DC. These groups, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and others will assist in distributing millions of brochures in English and Spanish. XM Satellite Radio will be airing public service announcements on its 21 Instant Traffic & Weather channels (XM 210-230) and its 24-hour Emergency Alert Channel (XM 247).

Safety tips, a more detailed Parents Report and other information will be available in both English and Spanish on ACTS new dedicated website:
<http://www.SafetyFeature.org>.

ACTS is a nonprofit organization that educates the public and policymakers about traffic safety issues, particularly those associated with occupant restraint systems and other vehicle technologies. ACTS develops educational materials, sponsors research and conducts symposia on a variety of highway safety topics. ACTS' members include DaimlerChrysler Corporation; Ford Motor Company; General Motors Corporation; Mazda North American Operations; Nissan North America, Inc.; Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.; Volkswagen of America, Inc. and the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Inc.

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