

Media release

Wednesday, 8 December 2021

RACT warning – don't leave kids or dogs in hot cars

Summer is here and with the weather warming up, the RACT is urging people to never leave children or pets in hot cars.

RACT spokesperson, Amira Vaatstra, said following a string of warm days over the past week, it's a timely reminder to Tasmanians of the dangers of leaving children and pets in hot cars.

"Over the past 12 months, RACT Roadside patrols received 222 callouts for children or pets locked inside cars.

"Of these callouts, 134 related to animals and 88 related to children, which is on average nearly two children and three animals each week.

"While it might seem fine to leave a child or pet in your car for a short period, or with the window ajar, in reality the consequences could be rapid and devastating.

"The temperature inside a parked vehicle on a typical summer's day could be 30 to 40 degrees hotter than the outside temperature," she said.

"That means the temperature outside only has to hit 20 degrees for the temperature inside a car to top 60 degrees.

"If you're stuck inside a car that's basically become an oven on wheels the consequences can be frightening.

"Young children, in particular, are more sensitive to heat than older children or adults, meaning they can be at greater risk of heat stroke and other health issues. Pets are also more prone to hot temperatures than humans as they cannot respond to heat the same way we do." Ms Vaatstra said.

The RACT will prioritise callouts to children and pets locked in cars, even if you're not a member.

“At the end of the day, it’s a pretty simple message – don’t leave children or pets unattended in a car, even for a moment. If you see a child or pet locked inside a car and you can’t find the driver, call the police immediately.”

Other facts to consider:

- Darker coloured cars can reach slightly higher temperatures when parked in the sun
- Interior trim colour has little impact on the speed the temperature inside a car increases
- Tinted windows make little difference to the temperature of the interior of a vehicle
- A large car can heat up just as quickly as a small car
- Having the windows down 5cm causes only a minor decrease in temperature

Tips to avoid accidental lock-ins:

- Always take your child with you – even if you only intend to leave the car for a brief time
- Keep the keys with the driver – never leave them with the child, in the ignition or on a seat
- Never let children play with keys or access an unattended vehicle
- Check the vehicle is empty before remote locking