



Media release

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RACT warns Tasmanians not to leave kids in cars

The state's peak road safety advocate is reminding motorists not to leave children alone in their vehicles following a significant number of rescues over the past 12 months.

General Manager Advocacy and Government Relations Mel Percival said over the past year, RACT has responded to 47 rescues of children and adults locked inside vehicles and 74 animals.

"Most cases are accidental and often involve parents or caregivers inadvertently locking keys inside the car.

"These situations can quickly escalate into life-threatening emergencies, and our roadside team prioritise these rescues," Ms Percival said.

"Concerningly, over the past ten years, we've rescued over 880 call outs," she said.

One of the leading causes of kids being locked in cars is when parents give their children the keys to keep them occupied while doing things such as loading shopping into the boot.

"In more modern vehicles, faulty door switches can trigger the auto re-lock function. If the vehicle doesn't register a door opening after unlocking, it can re-lock within 30 seconds, potentially with kids and keys inside.

"It is illegal to leave a vehicle running while unattended, it creates a heightened risk of theft or a mechanical fault that could cause the air conditioning to switch off. That's why it's crucial to never leave the car running with the aircon on.

"Temperatures inside vehicles can soar to 70 degrees Celsius within 10-15 minutes of direct sunlight during the warmer months, it doesn't take long for children to become severely dehydrated before organ failure sets in, followed by potentially catastrophic consequences.

"As we head into Autumn and experience milder or overcast days, we mustn't be complacent because even on milder days cars still heat up very quickly.

"When you factor a child's increased vulnerability to heat, dehydration, and heatstroke, being stuck inside a car is a very dangerous proposition.

"We urge all caregivers and parents to take extra care to avoid these preventable emergencies and to ensure the safety of their loved ones.

Ms Percival said the best way to prevent these incidents was to be vigilant and ensure the car keys are always with you.

RACT advises parents to:

- Never leave children unattended in a vehicle, even briefly.
- Avoid giving children car keys to play with.
- Do not leave a car running unattended.

If children are accidentally locked in your vehicle, call RACT. If it is an emergency, call 000.

ENDS