

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Equality



Saturday, 9 January 2021

## PREPARING FOR SUMMER AND KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Victorians are being urged to never leave kids in hot cars and to prepare for heatwaves this summer as new data reveals there have already been more than 380 callouts to people locked in cars since the end of September – almost all of them children and toddlers.

Minister for Health Martin Foley today joined paramedics to launch the *Never Leave Kids in Cars* and *Survive the Heat* campaigns, which warn parents about the dangers of leaving their children in the car, even for an instant, and encourage them to develop routines so that they automatically check the back seat before they lock up.

A car's temperature can more than double within minutes and a child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's, meaning they are at greater risk of life-threatening heatstroke, dehydration and organ damage when left in the car.

In 2020, paramedics responded to 1410 callouts to people locked in vehicles – 144 of them last month. The majority of these incidents shockingly involve children and babies aged up to three.

People are also being encouraged to recognise the signs of heatstroke which is a serious illness and requires immediate medical attention. Extreme heat kills more Victorians than any natural disaster.

Those at highest risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke are people over 65, anyone with a pre-existing medical condition, pregnant women, those breastfeeding and children aged up to five.

If people experience symptoms such as an extremely high temperature, flushed dry skin, a rapid pulse, headache and disorientation, they should call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

It is also important to be COVIDSafe this summer by practicing social distancing and wearing face masks in certain settings, but you can remove your mask to drink and stay hydrated.

To survive the heat:

- Drink plenty of water, stay cool and seek out air-conditioned buildings
- Plan ahead and schedule activities in the coolest part of the day
- If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen and avoid exercising in the heat
- Check-in on others - look after those most at risk in the heat

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

*"Our message is simple: don't leave your kids alone in the car – the consequences can be deadly."*

*"All Victorians should follow our simple steps to survive the heat this summer – drink water, stay cool, plan ahead and check on those at risk, especially the elderly and those with medical conditions."*