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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

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## SPALDING COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT / HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES THE “BEAT THE HEAT, CHECK THE BACK SEAT” INITIATIVE

Every year, children die of hyperthermia, also known as heat stroke, while being left unattended in vehicles. Hot cars and heat-related health risks are a threat to the more than 375,000 children in the State of Georgia. In 2014, there were 30 heatstroke deaths of children who were left unattended in vehicles, the first 7 occurred in April and May. Though these figures are down from 44 reported in 2013, awareness is still needed.

According to Safe Kids Worldwide data and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths in children age 14 and under representing 61 percent of total non-crash fatalities in this age group. Also, more than 500 children ages 14 and under are seen in emergency rooms for heat exhaustion in cars each year.

As parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or foster caregivers, it is our duty to help prevent more tragedies by remembering to **ACT**.

**Avoid** heat stroke-related injury and death by:

- Never leaving your child alone in the car, even for a minute.
- Consistently locking unattended vehicle doors and trunks.
- Create reminders and habits to give you a safety and establish a peace – of mind plan. When you drop off your child, make a habit of calling or texting other caregivers, so all of you know where your child is at all times.
- Place a purse, briefcase, gym bag, cell phone or computer on the back seat to provide a reminder to drop your child off at daycare.
- Set the alarm on your cell phone or computer calendar as a reminder to drop off your child at daycare. You can also ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up for daycare.

**Take Action** if you see an unattended child in a vehicle:

- Dial 911 immediately and follow the instructions that the emergency personnel provide – they are trained to determine if a child is in danger.
- Help spread the word!

***For more information, visit the  
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services or contact the  
Spalding County Emergency Management / Homeland Security at  
770-228-2129.***

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