



Western Australia  
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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Children Left In Cars Are Left In Danger

Kidsafe WA and SGIO have joined forces to urge parents to take children with them whenever they leave their car. The joint plea is in response to Monday's incident where an eight-month-old baby was abducted in her mother's car when it was stolen from a garage. "This incident highlights the speed with which events unfold," said Sue Wicks, Executive Officer of Kidsafe WA, "It is only sheer good luck that there was no tragic outcome. Had the car been involved in a crash or if the weather had been any warmer then the outcome could have been very different."

"It is difficult to know how frequently young children are left in cars because we only hear about the relatively few times when there is an adverse event," said Gary Moore, State Manager, SGIO. "The message Kidsafe WA and SGIO want to get out to parents and other carers is that **every** time you leave a child in a car, no matter for how short a time or whether you can still see the car or not, has the potential to turn to tragedy."

Children left alone in cars are subject to a number of risks, depending on their age. There is a risk of strangulation and of choking for unsupervised young children. There are the risks associated with the car being involved in a crash with unattended children inside. This recent event highlights the risk of abduction and related consequences if the car is stolen or hijacked with children inside. The most serious risk however is that of heat and dehydration.

The temperature inside a closed car can rise to dangerous levels very quickly and they don't need to rise by much to be a danger to children. Children are much more susceptible to the effects of heat than adults and are at greater risk of heatstroke. The younger the child, the quicker they will start to show signs of dehydration and heat stroke.

"The message is simple," says Sue Wicks, "Take your children with you when you leave your car, no matter for how short a time or how close you think you are to the car."

End

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