



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

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Howard County Police Investigating Death of Child in Car *Preliminary investigation indicates incident was likely accidental*

Howard County police are investigating what appears to be the heat-related death of a 23-month-old girl who was strapped into a child safety seat inside a car for approximately nine hours. The preliminary investigation indicates that the incident was likely accidental, although autopsy results are still pending. If the incident is determined to be accidental, charges likely would not be filed in the case.

Police were called to the 3100 block of Edgewood Road in Ellicott City by a neighbor June 25. Upon their arrival, officers found a child deceased in the back of a car parked in front of a residence. The child's mother was present at the location, had discovered the child inside the car and was very distraught. The family's name will not be released at this time due to the ongoing investigation.

Based on the preliminary investigation, police believe a change in the parents' morning routine may have resulted in the child being inadvertently left in the back seat of the car. Detectives are continuing to investigate the incident.

The National Safe Kids campaign suggests these tips for parents and caregivers:

- Place something that you'll need at your next stop – such as a purse, a lunch, gym bag or briefcase – on the floor of the backseat where the child is sitting. This simple act could help prevent you from accidentally forgetting a child.
- Teach children not to play in, on or around vehicles.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- Always lock a vehicle's doors and trunk – especially at home. Keep keys and remote entry devices out of children's reach.

According to the Howard County Health Department, cars parked in direct sunlight can reach internal temperatures up to 131° F - 172° F when outside temperatures are 80° F – 100° F. When the outside temperature is 83° F, even with the window rolled down two inches, the temperature inside the car can reach 109° F in only 15 minutes. In hotter weather, a vehicle can warm to dangerous, life-threatening levels in only 10 minutes.

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