



July 1, 2025

## **JULY IS PURPLE RIBBON MONTH**

### Keeping kids safe in and around motor vehicles

(Bakersfield, CA) – On Tuesday, June 24th, the Kern County Board of Supervisors proclaimed July as Purple Ribbon Month in Kern County, in honor of Kaitlyn’s Law. “Kaitlyn’s Law,” passed in 2001, which makes it a citable offense to leave children under the age of six unattended in a motor vehicle without the supervision of someone at least 12 years of age. This law is in honor of six-month-old Kaitlyn Marie Russell, who died on August 15, 2000, after she was left behind in a hot van by a caregiver.

Kern County dedicates July as Purple Ribbon Month in memory of Kaitlyn and all the children who have lost their lives to preventable injuries in and around cars. This month is an opportunity to increase public awareness about the dangers of leaving children unattended in or around motor vehicles. **As of this year, twelve children have succumbed to hyperthermia in the United States due to such circumstances.** In 2024, there were a total of 40 recorded fatalities involving children left in hot cars. Often, these heartbreaking incidents occur when a parent or guardian unintentionally leaves a child in a vehicle, miscommunicates their whereabouts, or when a child inadvertently enters a car alone.

To combat these preventable tragedies, we strongly encourage the public to adopt the following safety practices:

- Look before you lock your vehicle
- Never leave children unattended in or around a motor vehicle
- Leave an important item like a purse or key near the child as a reminder.

We urge all individuals and organizations to make Kern County a safer place for children and families by promoting safe practices around motor vehicles. We invite the media to share content from our website, [www.kcdhs.org](http://www.kcdhs.org) as well as our social media sites, which include Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the username KernCountyDHS.

Throughout the month, we will be available for interviews in both English & Spanish with local media. For more information, contact Alison Votaw at (661) 428-0471 or [votawa@kerndhs.com](mailto:votawa@kerndhs.com)

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