



Lito Morillo
Director

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JULY IS PURPLE RIBBON MONTH

Keeping kids safe in and around motor vehicles

(Bakersfield, CA) – On Tuesday, June 28th, 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.

The Kern County Department of Human Services, with support from the Kern County Fire Department, Bakersfield Fire Department, Kern County Sheriff, Bakersfield Police Department and the California Highway Patrol, is once again launching “Purple Ribbon Month” in memory of Kaitlyn Marie Russell.

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. **Already this year, eight children have died due to hyperthermia in the United States; all five years of age and younger.** In 2021, there were 23 hot car deaths in the US. 56% of those deaths were from a parent or guardian that unknowingly left a child in a motor vehicle.

We are encouraging the public to do the following:

- 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 as well as our social media sites, which include Facebook (Kern County Department of Human Services), Instagram ([kerncountydhs](https://www.instagram.com/kerncountydhs)) & Twitter (Kern County Department of Human Services).

Throughout the month, we will be available for interviews in both English & Spanish with local media. For more information, contact Jana Slagle at (661) 342-8054 or slaglej@kerndhs.com.

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