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Helping to Combat Child Heatstroke, Automakers Commit to Introducing New Vehicles with Rear Seat Reminder Systems

WASHINGTON, DC — Parents and caregivers will soon be reminded to check for children in rear seats, thanks to an automaker-led voluntary commitment to add rear seat reminder systems to new vehicles. This announcement is the industry’s latest effort to help enhance child safety, and expands upon widespread efforts to increase public awareness regarding the dangers of leaving children alone in a vehicle.

Under this commitment, automakers will innovate by introducing a wide range of approaches to help parents and caregivers remember to check the back seat as they leave a vehicle. At a minimum, these prompts will include a combination of auditory and visual alerts that will activate after a driver turns off the vehicle. With this pledge, the auto industry commits to having the rear seat reminder feature in essentially all cars and trucks by Model Year 2025 or sooner.

“Automakers have been exploring ways to address this safety issue and this commitment underscores how such innovations and increased awareness can help children right now,” said Alliance Interim President and CEO David Schwietert. “Automakers have come together to develop a pathway forward, which not only incorporates existing systems, but also supports new, innovative approaches.”

John Bozzella, President and CEO of Global Automakers said “Children die each year from heatstroke suffered when left unattended in the back seat of passenger vehicles. As most of these deaths are caused by children being unintentionally left in vehicles, our members are taking action to help prevent these tragic losses by adding rear-seat reminder systems to prompt parents and caregivers to check the back seat before exiting their car.”

Members of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers and the Association of Global Automakers, which account for nearly 100 percent of the U.S. light-duty vehicle sales, worked -More-
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together to establish the voluntary commitment that will give new car buyers access to the safety features faster than would have been possible under a government rulemaking process. Such rulemaking efforts traditionally take four to eight years to finalize.

While individual automakers have committed to roll out the new features soon, it is important for parents and caregivers to know that it is never okay to leave a child alone in a vehicle. Raising public awareness about the danger related to leaving children in vehicles is absolutely critical to help prevent heatstroke fatalities.

As part of its continued public awareness and education campaign, industry leaders have aligned with other organizations to encourage the public to “Look Before You Lock.”

- It’s never okay to leave a child alone in a vehicle for any length of time. It only takes 10 minutes for a vehicle’s interior temperature to rise nearly 20 degrees, and a child’s body heats up three to five times faster than an adult’s.

- If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

Although this individual commitment by automakers applies to new vehicles in the future, there are also several cell phone apps available as well as some child car seats that include alarm features that can help remind drivers there’s a child in the vehicle.

For more information about heatstroke prevention, and to help spread awareness, visit:

www.autoalliance.org/heatstroke
www.globalautomakers.org/advocacy/vehicle-safety/heatstroke-prevention

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The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers is a trade association representing 12 automakers. Together, our mission is to promote policies that allow automakers the freedom and control to build cars and light trucks that are safe, reliable, energy-efficient, clean and smart — all so our customers can enjoy greater peace of mind as they go about their daily lives. Visit www.autoalliance.org.

The Association of Global Automakers represents the U.S. operations of international motor vehicle manufacturers, original equipment suppliers, automotive technology companies and other automotive-related trade associations. Global Automakers’ mission is to educate and advocate for policies that help foster a vibrant, growing, free and open U.S. auto industry for all stakeholders. The Association collaborates with industry leaders, legislators, regulators, and other players in Washington, DC and 50 state capitals to create the kind of public policy that promotes innovation, vehicle safety and environmental responsibility. Visit us at www.globalautomakers.org