

## CHAPTER 345

**AN ACT** concerning unattended children in motor vehicles and supplementing Title 39 of the Revised Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.39:3-76.2o Findings, declarations relative to unattended children in motor vehicles.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. Statistics show that, on average, 38 children die each year from heat-related deaths after being trapped inside motor vehicles, and even the most well intentioned parents or caregivers can unknowingly leave a sleeping baby in a car resulting in the child's injury or even death.

b. The temperature of a vehicle, even with an open window, can rise rapidly and a child may easily incur heat stroke, causing brain damage or death within minutes.

c. In addition to heat stroke, the consequences of leaving a child unattended in and around a motor vehicle include the dangers of abduction, strangulation, trunk entrapment, being run over, and personal injuries caused by accidental and uncontrolled movement of the vehicle.

d. While motor vehicle related injuries are a leading cause of death among children in the United States, the deaths and injuries caused by leaving children unattended in and around motor vehicles are predictable and preventable and can be greatly reduced with increased awareness of the risks associated with this dangerous practice.

e. A public awareness campaign to provide information to, and promote educational programs for, families, teachers, and community members regarding the dangers of children being left unattended in and around motor vehicles is in the public interest and will serve the interests of public safety in this State.

C.39:3-76.2p Public awareness campaign.

2. a. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, shall establish a public awareness campaign to provide information to the general public concerning:

(1) the dangers of leaving a child unattended in and around a motor vehicle; and

(2) preventative measures that may be taken by parents or guardians to promote child safety and protect against injuries or death caused by leaving a child unattended in and around a motor vehicle.

b. The Director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety shall provide printed and electronic educational materials concerning child safety in and around motor vehicles and shall disseminate those materials: to child care centers licensed pursuant to P.L.1983, c.492 (C.30:5B-1 et seq.); at public venues throughout the State; and by any other means as the director may determine, in collaboration with, and with the assistance of, other State, county, and municipal governmental entities including, but not limited to, distribution on the premises of, or through mail or electronic communications by, any office that is open to members of the general public and is operated, administered, or used to provide services to the general public by the Department of Children and Families and the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission.

c. The Director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety shall report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 24 months after the effective date of this act, on the activities and accomplishments of the public awareness campaign.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 16, 2018.