Summer has arrived in a big way as temperatures remain hot and smoke from distant wildfires fills the valley. The car can be a form of escape or a deadly trap in the heat. Every year in the U.S., children and pets dies from being left in enclosed vehicles. This time of year also brings the hazard of poor air quality from regional wildfires. This can directly impact those with health sensitivities and chronic conditions. However, there are several things you can do to keep you and those around you safe from these hazards.

1. Never leave passengers in an enclosed vehicle when it is warm outside. Children are especially vulnerable as their bodies warm at a significantly faster rate than adults.

2. After ensuring that all people and pets are out of the vehicle, lock the doors, even at home, so that children or pets cannot get accidentally trapped inside an unattended vehicle.

3. Before putting children in a vehicle, make sure the seating surfaces and safety equipment are not too hot. Child safety seats, harnesses, and buckles can all become very hot.

The majority of the increase in temperature inside a vehicle occurs during the first half-hour and can accelerate heat related illness. Heat stroke can occur when the body’s temperature exceeds 104° F. This temperature will overwhelm the brain’s ability to control temperature. Once this occurs symptoms may include, dizziness, disorientation, agitation, confusion, seizure, loss of consciousness, and or death. For more information about heat safety, visit www.weather.gov/safety/heat.

This page was created by Ada County Emergency Management.

Emergency Preparedness pointer
Car safety tips

The Treasure Valley is susceptible to air quality issues during this time of year. Most of the issues stemming from current wildfires burning in the region and surrounding states. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) produces daily air quality reports and forecasts for areas all around the state. This information also includes smoke outlook summaries, real-time smoke monitoring, and health impacts and recommendations for the public. Understanding this information will help you know what to do to protect your health. It is also important to be mindful of burn bans in place for your area and region and the variances of burn bans across the state. All of this can be found on the wildfire smoke info page on IDEQ’s website: www.deq.idaho.gov/air-quality/burning/current-wildfire-smoke-info/