

How long can I leave a sleeping baby in the car?

Today's [pundits and doctors insist they know what's best for our children](#) while not allowing parents to do right by their own judgement. Helicopter parenting laws are coming to municipalities in ways unimagined, but the anti-helicopter parenting movement is pushing back. Humor is one way we're doing it, including this clever video shows the stress parents are feeling.

It turns out that babies are rather weak when it comes to leaving them alone. So, how long can I leave a sleeping baby in the car? While nobody is advocating you leave a sleeping baby in the car during the summer, some of us are willing to admit that we've done it before in circumstances that are seemingly harmless, perhaps just to run and retrieve the mail from a mailbox at the end of a driveway, or to get out and pump gas.

How long can I leave a sleeping baby in the car? Well, now we can't leave the car unattended at all. It's illegal, something the [station wagon generation](#) had nothing to worry about.

In fact, in some places it is [illegal to leave a 15-year old unattended in the car](#). At 16 years you can leave them alone. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services [has outlined how old a child can be left alone in a car](#):

Leaving a child unattended in a car is a crime that is punishable under the Texas Penal Code, Title 5, Chapter 22, Section 10: Sec. 22.10. LEAVING A CHILD IN A VEHICLE. (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly leaves a child in a motor vehicle for longer than five minutes, knowing that the child is: (1) younger than seven years of age; and (2) not attended by an individual in the vehicle who is 14 years of age or older. (b) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

The nuances surrounding these laws are really what we need to consider applying in cases involving "abandoned children."



Parents should remember that in certain locations the police have a zero-tolerance policy when enforcing how long parents can leave kids unattended. An [incident](#) in North Augusta, South Carolina, demonstrated that police will take children away and lock up the parents when kids are left alone – even in a public park.

Most of us realize that [instincts are more important than laws](#), however. So, there's not likely to be a significant number of arrests made for a mommy who runs into the bank to drop off a deposit. Or will there? To leave a sleeping baby in the car has always had a taboo attached to it, but now there's likely to be jail time, too. And rightly so for the idiots who aren't responsible enough to know it's dangerous.

It is cause for concern that parents are stupid and hurt children through negligence, but it's also cause to take notice that a brave new world in which we live has a way of forcing us into ridiculous habits that can significantly impact the way we parent.