

Man Charged In Death Of Baby He Left In Hot Car For 8 Hours

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News

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ATLANTA (CBS46) - A 22-month-old child has died after being left in a hot car for more than eight hours.



According to Cobb County police, the father of the toddler was supposed to drop the baby off at daycare, but forgot. The father then drove to work around 9 a.m. Wednesday and left the baby in the car. It wasn't until the man left work and started driving home that he looked in the backseat and saw the child still strapped in the car seat and unresponsive.

"It is tough, I am not sure how someone could forget they have a child in the backseat," Dale Hamilton said.

Hamilton said he was in the Akers Mill Square shopping center getting lunch when he saw the man drive into the parking lot, stop his car straddling two lanes of traffic, jump out and begin CPR on the baby.

"He hopped out of his car. I didn't know what he was doing at the time," Hamilton said. "But, he eventually pulled the child out of the car seat. I guess he was trying to un-restrain him. He pulled him out of the car seat, laid him on the ground and was trying to resuscitate him."

Hamilton said it was difficult to watch.

"He was constantly saying, 'What have I done, what have I done.'"

Some good Samaritans tried to resuscitate the child but it was too late. Investigators took the father in for questioning at the Cobb County Police Department. Police said the man had to be restrained at the scene because he was so distraught. At this point charges have not been filed. Police said pending the outcome of their investigation the father could face a charge of involuntary manslaughter.

Temperatures in Atlanta topped 90 degrees Wednesday afternoon. Temperatures inside a hot car could go as high as 130 to 140 degrees in a few hours.

Updated Thursday Night:

Police said Justin Ross Harris, 34, was supposed to drop the child off at daycare, but forgot. He then drove to work around 9 a.m. Wednesday and left the toddler in the car. It wasn't until Harris left work and started driving home that he looked in the backseat and saw the child still strapped in the car seat and unresponsive.

A witness saw Harris pull into the Akers Mill Square shopping center, stop his car straddling two lanes of traffic, jump out and begin CPR on the toddler.

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Harris is charged with murder and cruelty to children, both felonies and is currently being held without bond at the Cobb County Adult Detention Center.

He made his first court appearance Thursday night and was denied bond.

Several friends and relatives were seen at Harris' condominium in Marietta Thursday morning, but they declined to speak about the incident.