

Richmond Police: Mom left kids in car in hot sun

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By Laura Geller

RICHMOND, VA (WWBT) – A Richmond mom remained behind bars Wednesday night, accused of leaving two four-year old girls in a hot car. Christina Galva is charged with two counts of felony child neglect. It's a serious crime because the outcome could have turned deadly.

23-year-old Christina Galva drove to the Southside Community Center, rolled up her windows, turned off the engine, and locked the car. Her four-year-old daughter and another four-year-old girl were left inside to bake in the sun.

Just after noon Wednesday, the sun blazed high in the sky, beating down on the cars below. That's when police say a passerby saw two little girls locked in a car.

"It could be very, very dangerous in this hot weather," said Captain Steve Drew with the Richmond Police Department.

Richmond Police officials said Christina Galva rushed out of the center when she saw the activity and unlocked the vehicle for officers. They found two flushed and sweaty children. Emergency medical personnel treated them at the scene. At the time, detectives measured the temperature outside at 92 degrees.

"We estimate the inside of that vehicle was between 102-103 degrees," said Capt. Drew. "You've got time in minutes and then degrees, as time goes on the temperature gets hotter. The younger you are, the more dangerous it can be."

Galva told detectives she left the girls in the car for between five and ten minutes. It's hard to determine the exact impacts the heat had on the bodies of the four-year-olds. Patient First Dr. Elizabeth Perkins said the danger is evident.

"If you become dehydrated or are in the heat for a prolonged period of time or are denied access to fluids, then you can get heat exhaustion," she said.

If left unchecked that exhaustion can become heat stroke, which in the worst cases could lead to death.

Child neglect is a felony charge that could land Galva with a sentence of 12 months to five years in prison. Both four-year-old girls were released to the mother of the second child. Neither child had to be transported to the hospital.

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