

Child left in hot car, couple charged with neglect

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Lexington Park, MD-- On June 11, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Deputy Lawrence responded to Toyota of Southern Maryland at Three Notch Road for the report of a child locked in an unattended vehicle.

When Lawrence arrived on the scene contact was made with an employee, who advised an older Honda passenger car had been parked in the parking lot and a child was left inside.

As Lawrence was driving through the parking lot, he observed the vehicle attempting to turn to the northbound lane onto Three Notch Road. The deputy stopped the vehicle. A man identified as Charles C. Welch, 32 of Callaway was seated in the passenger seat.

As Lawrence approached the vehicle, he noticed that a toddler-aged child was strapped into a car seat in the back of the car.

The employee advised, "he and another employee were told by a customer about the unattended child. They went to the vehicle and saw the victim," according to charging documents.

The employee was unsure if the child was sleeping or in some distress. According to the employee, "he believed all of the windows on the vehicle were up and the car was not running."

Lawrence then spoke to a customer who advised, the front windows on the vehicle were rolled down, but the vehicle ignition was not on. He advised, "he tried to give the child something cold to drink, and the mother walked over to the vehicle at that point," according to charging documents.

Welch and his wife, who was identified as Sherry N. Welch, 33, of Callaway, used two cell phones to act as a baby monitor while they looked at cars on the dealership lot. The vehicle was not running, and the outside temperature was 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

According to charging documents, "Welch left the child alone, in the extremely hot car for over 18 minutes."

Welch was charged with reckless endangerment, neglect of a minor and confinement of an unattended child. Also, Sherry Welch faces similar charges.

At this time, neither defendant has a scheduled court date. Both defendants face maximum jail sentences of 10 years and one month and/or a maximum fine of \$10,500.

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