

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES  
**Infant dies**  
after being left in van in Felton

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By Fernando Quintero  
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An 11-day-old baby boy who had been placed with a foster family by Santa Cruz County child welfare authorities died Friday after he was left in a van with the windows closed for more than 90 minutes, officials said Saturday.

Paramedics were called to the home of the infant's foster parents on Highway 9 in Felton about 2:38 p.m. Friday, according to Santa Cruz County sheriff's investigators. The child was dead when paramedics arrived, but was taken to Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz.

"Apparently, the family wasn't aware the child was in there," said Will Lightbourne, director of the Santa Cruz County Human Resources Department, which oversees the county's Child Protective Services agency.

Sheriff's investigators did not re-

See BABY, Page 2B

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BABY, from Page 1B

lease information on why the infant was in the van.

Although the temperature in Felton on Friday reached only 76 degrees, Lightbourne said the temperature in the parked van was considerably warmer because all of the windows had been rolled up.

Since 1984, at least 100 children have been placed in the home of the Felton couple, who Lightbourne described as a "stalwart family."

The couple, who officials refused to identify, have two adopted children and were taking care of four foster children.

"They are blue-collar, good kind of people," Lightbourne said. "This is a real tragedy for them."

The baby had been taken from his natural parents, Lightbourne said, but he could not reveal the reason.

A sheriff's spokeswoman said the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's office will review the death for possible criminal charges.

Lightbourne said his department will also conduct its own investigation, then refer the case to the state board that licenses foster parents.

The Child Protective Services agency was criticized recently for its handling of child-neglect complaints against Ruby Pointer, who was arrested June 19 after police found her three daughters — ages 2, 4, and 6 — living in a squalid townhouse and unable to speak.

Agency social workers missed deadlines, did not make required house calls and responded inadequately to neighbors' complaints, according to a state investigation unsealed Thursday.