

Remote Not In Traffic Surveillance Hyperthermia Investigation
Dynamic Science, Inc. / Case Number: DS07022
1998 Nissan Maxima
Hawaii
March 2007

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The crash investigation process is an inexact science which requires that physical evidence such as skid marks, vehicular damage measurements, and occupant contact points be coupled with the investigator's expert knowledge and experience of vehicle dynamics and occupant kinematics in order to determine the pre-crash, crash, and post-crash movements of involved vehicles and occupants.

Because each crash is a unique sequence of events, generalized conclusions cannot be made concerning the crashworthiness performance of the involved vehicle(s) or their safety systems.

1. Report No. DS07022	2. Government Accession No.		3. Recipient Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle Remote Not In Traffic Surveillance Hyperthermia Investigation			5. Report Date April 15, 2008	
			6. Performing Organization Report No.	
7. Author(s) Dynamic Science, Inc.			8. Performing Organization Report No.	
9. Performing Organization name and Address Dynamic Science, Inc. 299 West Cerritos Avenue Anaheim, CA 92805			10. Work Unit No. (TRAIS)	
			11. Contract or Grant no. DTNH22-07-C-00045	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address U.S. Dept. of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE Washington, DC 20590			13. Type of report and period Covered [Report Month, Year]	
			14. Sponsoring Agency Code	
15. Supplemental Notes				
16. Abstract This remote investigation focused on the hyperthermia related death of a 3-year-old female child in a 1998 Nissan Maxima four-door sedan. The child had been left in a booster seat in the vehicle by her father while he visited friends at a local apartment for one hour and 40 minutes. After discovering the child unconscious in the vehicle, the driver brought her to a local fire station where they attempted to revive her until EMS could arrive. She was taken from the fire station to a local hospital. She was pronounced dead at 1549 hours. An autopsy was conducted. The pathological diagnosis included the following: petechial hemorrhages of the skin, bite marks of the lip and tongue, severe cerebral edema, marked acute visceral congestion, subpleural and subepicardial petechial hemorrhages, and pulmonary congestion. The cause of death was listed as hyperthermia due to, or as a consequence of, environmental exposure/excessive heat.				
17. Key Words Not in Traffic Surveillance (NITS), hyperthermia, fatality			18. Distribution Statement	
19. Security Classif. (of this report)	20. Security Classif. (of this page)	21. No of pages	22. Price	

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BACKGROUND

This remote investigation focused on the hyperthermia related death of a 3-year-old female child in a 1998 Nissan Maxima four-door sedan (**Figures 1-2**). The child had been left in a booster seat in the vehicle by her father while he visited friends at a local apartment for one hour and 40 minutes. During this time frame, the temperature ranged between 25.6 degrees C (78 degrees F) and 26.1 degrees C (79 degrees F). After discovering the child unconscious in the vehicle, the driver brought her to a local fire station where they attempted to revive her until emergency medical technicians could arrive. She was taken from the fire station to a local hospital. She was pronounced dead at 1549 hours.

This Not In Traffic Surveillance (NITS) Hyperthermia investigation was initiated in response to an on-line news article about the death. DSI was notified of the article on March 23, 2007. DSI located and obtained the autopsy report on April 2, 2007. The investigating police department was contacted. An unintended death report was completed but it was the policy of the agency to not release this type of report. This information was forwarded to NHTSA and a sanitized copy of the report was obtained through the Fatal Analysis Reporting System (FARS). DSI obtained this information June 22, 2007. Since the report was obtained through FARS, it appears that this incident was reported as a fatality to the state. On-scene images of the vehicle and the child seat were not available.

The following information was obtained from the autopsy report, a sanitized police report and several on-line news articles.



Figure 1. Exemplar view of 1998 Nissan Maxima (left front)

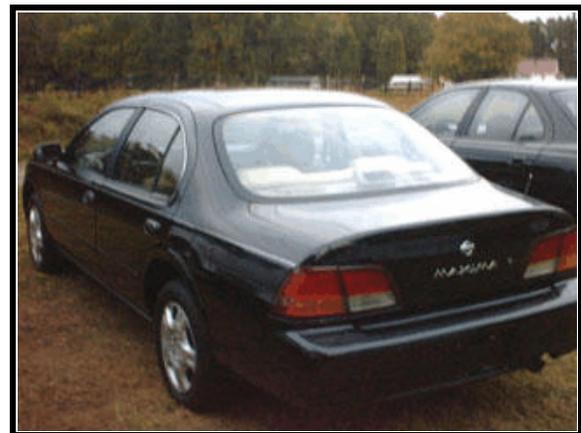


Figure 2. Exemplar view of 1998 Nissan Maxima (left rear)

SUMMARY

Vehicle Data

The 1998 Nissan Maxima was identified by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN): 1JN1CA21D7WTxxxxxx. The Nissan was a four-door sedan that was equipped with a 3.0 liter, six cylinder engine and an automatic transmission. The vehicle was gray in color.

Incident Site

This hyperthermia related death occurred in March, 2007 between 1200 and 1340 hours. The scene was the parking lot of an apartment complex (**Figure 3**). There does not appear to be any shaded areas or area covered by foliage.

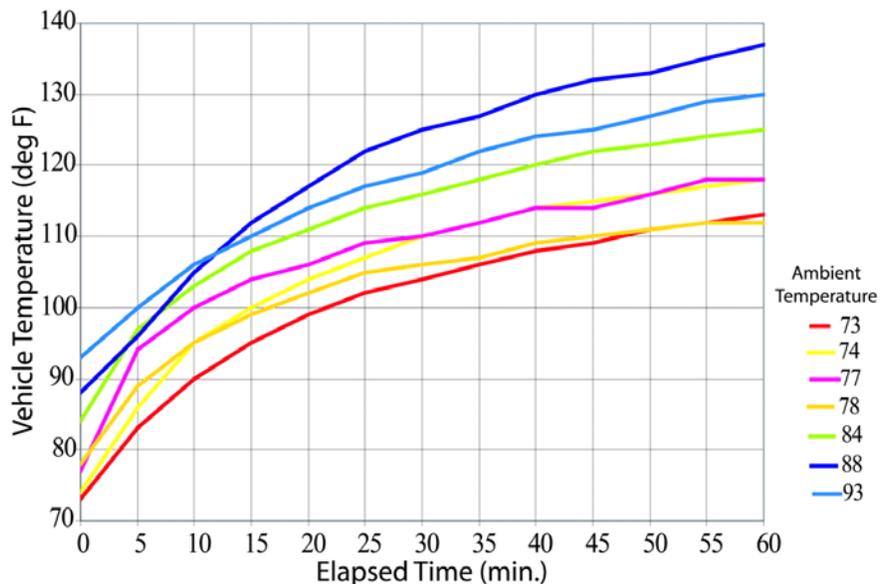


Figure 3. Case vehicle parked in apartment parking lot

The ambient temperatures and wind speeds at the nearest reporting station (airport) for the time frame the child was in the vehicle is shown in the following table:

Time	Temperature	Wind Speed
1153	25.6 C (78 F)	14 km/h (9 mph)
1253	25.6 C (78 F)	13 km/h (8 mph)
1353	26.1 C (79 F)	16 km/h (10 mph)

In an observational study, McLaren, C. et al, noted that the internal temperature of a vehicle with the windows closed increased 3.2 degrees F per 5-minute interval, with 80% of the temperature rise occurring during the first 30 minutes. The study also reported the final temperature depended on the starting ambient temperature but even at the coolest ambient temperatures, the internal temperature reached 47.2 degrees C (117 degrees F). Given the starting ambient temperature of 25.6 degrees C (78 degrees F) in this case, the internal temperature would have reached approximately 40.6 C (105 degrees F) in 30 minutes.

Representative vehicle temperature rise over time

McLaren, C. et al. *Pediatrics* 2005;116:e109-e112

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PEDIATRICS

Incident

The driver was the child's father. He drove to a friend's house to fix a computer. He took the child with him and placed her in a child seat which was in the rear of the 1998 Nissan Maxima four-door sedan. The Nissan was gray in color. At approximately 1200 hours, the driver arrived at his friend's apartment. He went up to the apartment and forgot the child was in the vehicle. It is believed that the vehicle was locked and the windows were closed at this time.

At approximately 1340 hours, the driver returned to the vehicle and found the child unconscious and unresponsive. According to one weather expert quoted in an on line news article "with a high temperature of 81 degrees, the temperature inside the vehicle would have reached about 115 degrees after 30 minutes and more than 130 degrees after an hour."

After discovering the child unconscious in the vehicle, the driver brought her to a local fire station where they attempted to revive her until EMS could arrive. She was taken from the fire station to a local hospital. She arrived at the hospital at 1407 hours. She arrived unresponsive and without a pulse. She was pronounced dead at 1549 hours.

Child Occupant Data

The 3-year-old female child had a reported height and weight of 97 cm (38 in) and 13 kg (28 lbs), respectively. An autopsy was conducted by a forensic pathologist. The cause of death was found to be hyperthermia due to, or as a consequence of, environmental exposure/excessive heat. The child's rectal temperature was found to be 42.2 degrees C (108 degrees F). Hyperthermia is defined as the elevation of core body temperature to above 37.2 degrees C (99 degrees F). The pathological diagnosis included the following injuries: petechial hemorrhages of the skin, severe cerebral edema, marked acute visceral congestion, subpleural and subepicardial petechial hemorrhages, and pulmonary congestion. An external examination revealed a number of minor injuries, including the following: bite marks of the lip and tongue, contusion to the lower back, contusion to the right forearm.

<u>Injury</u>	<u>OIC Code</u>	<u>Injury Mechanism</u>	<u>Confidence Level</u>
Brain swelling and edema	140660.3,9	Hyperthermia	Certain
Bite marks to lip and tongue	290600.1,8 243400.1,8	Unknown	Unknown
Contusion, lower back	690402.1,8	Unknown	Unknown
Contusion, right forearm	790402.1,1	Unknown	Unknown

Attachment 1. Field Data Forms



1. Case Number

IDENTIFICATION

2. Date of Crash ____ / ____ / ____

3. Time of Crash _____

Code reported military time of crash.

NOTE: Midnight = 2400
Unknown = 9999

AMBIENT CONDITIONS

4. Light Conditions

- Daylight
- Dark
- Dark but lighted
- Dawn
- Dusk
- Unknown

5. Atmospheric Conditions
(Select all that apply)

- Clear-No adverse conditions
- Cloudy
- Rain
- Snow
- Fog, Smog, Smoke
- Sleet, Hail (freezing rain or drizzle)
- Blowing Snow
- Severe Crosswinds
- Blowing Sand, Soil, Dirt
- Other (specify):
- Unknown

6. Temperature

- Below 0 degrees Celsius (Below 32 F)
- 1-10 degrees Celsius (33-50 F)
- >10-24 degrees Celsius (51-75 F)
- Over 24 degrees Celsius (Over 75 F)
- Unknown

SCENE INFORMATION

7. Type of area in which crash occurred
(Select all that apply)

- Single family residential
- Row houses/townhouses
- Multi family housing
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural
- Unknown

8. Driver exterior sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)

- None
- Other vehicles
- Building
- Trees
- Shrubby
- Other (specify) _____
- Utility poles
- Signs
- Glare
- Unknown
- No driver present

9. Crash location

- Driveway
- Parking Lot
- Sidewalk
- Alley
- Intersection of driveway and sidewalk
- Road / street
- Roadside / shoulder
- Other (specify) _____
- Unknown

10. Non motorist sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)

- None
- Other vehicles
- Building
- Trees
- Shrubby
- Utility poles
- Signs
- Glare
- Other (specify) _____
- Unknown

11. Grade at parked position _____ +/- _____ %

12. Estimated distance from parked position to impact

_____ . _____ m

13. Estimated speed at impact _____ +/- _____ kmph

14. Grade at impact _____ +/- _____ %

15. Estimated distance from impact to vehicle final rest

_____ . _____ m

Unknown = 999 Reference Items 11,12, 13, 14, 15



VEHICLE FORM

1. Case Number _____

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION

2. VIN _____

3. Model Year _____

4. Vehicle Make (specify): _____

5. Vehicle Model (specify): _____

GLAZING

Location	Presence (check)	Status (select)	Clarity (select)	Tint (check)	Glazing Obstructions (specify if present)
Windshield		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
LF		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
RF		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
2 nd Left		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
2 nd Right		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
3 rd Left		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
3 rd Right		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
Left Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
Right Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
Roof		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
Other (specify)		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		

TIRE DATA

6. Vehicle Manufacturer Recommended Tire Size _____

7. LF Tire Size _____

9. RF Tire Size _____

8. LR Tire Size _____

10. RR Tire Size _____

Seats / Head Restraint Data

Seat Position	Seat Type (Select from below)	Head Restraint (Check if available)	Head Restraint Adjustment (select)	NOTES:
Front Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
Front Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
Front Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	

Seat Type codes:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 0 = No seat or seat folded down | 8 = Pedestal (i.e. column supported) |
| 1 = Bucket | 9 = Box mounted (i.e. van type) |
| 2 = Bucket w/ folding back | 10= Other seat type (specify) |
| 3 = Bench | 99= Unknown seat type |
| 4 = Bench with folding back cushions | |
| 5 = Bench w/ folding back | |
| 6 = Split bench w/ separate back cushions | |
| 7 = Split bench w/ separate folding back | |

VEHICLE MEASUREMENTS

Clearance Heights	Measurements (all from ground, and in centimeters)	NOTES
Beltline		
Top of trunk/tailgate		
Bottom of bumper		
Trailer hitch (if applicable)		
Undercarriage		
Sway bar		
Axle		
Differential		
Other (specify):		
Sensor Height (if equipped)		
Camera Height (if equipped)		



1. Case Number

PARKING AID PRESENCE

2. Type of backing/parking aid present

- OEM camera
- OEM ultrasonic/radar sensor
- OEM combination camera-ultrasonic/radar sensor
- OEM Fresnel lens
- OEM interior mirrors
- Aftermarket camera
- Aftermarket ultrasonic/radar sensor
- Aftermarket combination camera-ultrasonic radar sensor
- Aftermarket Fresnel lens
- Aftermarket interior mirrors
- Other (specify): _____

CAMERA INFORMATION

Specify field of view measurements on diagram

3. System make/model

4. Video monitor type

- None present
- LCD (color)
- CRT (black & white)
- Unknown

5. Video display size _____ cm
(Diagonal)

6. Camera location

- None present
- Bumper
- License plate
- Tailgate/Hatch/Trunk
- Other (specify): _____

7. Video image quality under scene lighting conditions

- None present
- Good
- Average
- Poor (specify): _____
- Unknown

8. Was the camera functioning properly

- None present
- Yes
- No, poor image quality due to glare
- No, poor image quality due to atmospheric conditions
- No, camera turned off
- No, camera inoperable
- Unknown

ULTRASONIC/RADAR SENSOR

Specify object detection range on diagram

9. System make/model

10. Auditory warning illumination

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown

11. Number of sensors _____

12. Sensor locations
(Select all that apply)

- No sensor present
- Left bumper
- Center bumper
- Right bumper
- License plate area
- Tailgate/Hatch/Trunk

13. Was warning system functioning properly

- No sensor present
- Yes, system alerted driver
- No, system did not alert driver
- No, system turned off
- No, system inoperable
- Unknown

14. Did driver react to warning

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown

15. Did driver report common false warnings

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown



DRIVER FORM

1. Case Number

DRIVER PROFILE

2. Driver's Age

99 = Unknown

3. Driver's Sex

- Male
- Female
- Unknown

4. Driver's Height

999 = Unknown

_____ cm

5. Driver's Weight

999 = Unknown

_____ kg

6. Driver eyewear worn

(Select all that apply)

- None
- Eyeglasses
- Sunglasses
- Contacts
- Unknown

7. Driver vision deficiency condition

(Select all that apply)

- None
- Near sighted
- Far sighted
- Astigmatism
- Other (specify): _____
- Unknown

8. Non motorist's relationship to driver

- No relationship
- Child
- Grandchild
- Sibling
- Neighbor
- Friend
- Other (specify): _____
- Unknown

DRIVER ACTIONS

9. Driver approach to vehicle for entry

- From left front
- From left
- From left rear
- From right rear
- From right front
- Circled vehicle
- Return trip (backing into driveway/lot)
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

10. Driver entry interruption
(Select all that apply)

- Direct trip from building to vehicle
- Loaded items into vehicle
- Spoke with family
- Spoke with neighbors
- Spoke with contacted nonmotorist
- Return trip (backing into driveway/lot)
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

11. Purpose of backing

- Leaving parking space in parking lot
- Backing onto roadway from driveway
- Entering parking space in parking lot
- Backing into driveway from roadway
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

12. Where was driver going

Description:

13. Driver in a hurry

- Yes N/A
- No Unknown
- Unknown

14. How did driver check behind (rear area of vehicle) after vehicle entry

(Select all that apply)

- Did not look
- Checked mirrors
- Turned right and looked back
- Turned left and looked back
- Viewed Camera
- Listened for auditory/visual warning from system
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A Unknown

15. Estimated time between vehicle entry and start of backing

- 0-10 Seconds Over 60 Seconds
- 11-30 Seconds N/A
- 31-60 Seconds Unknown

16. What direction was the driver looking during backing maneuver
(Select all that apply)
- Straight ahead
 - Right
 - Left
 - Rearward
 - At object inside the car
 - At mirrors
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
17. Was the driver distracted during back up maneuver
(Select all that apply)
- No non-driving activities
 - External**
 - Looking at other vehicles
 - Looking at other non motorist
 - Looking at intended turn destination
 - External focus, not specified
 - Other external focus (specify): _____
 - Internal**
 - Looking at other occupant
 - Talking to passenger
 - Dialing phone
 - Talking on phone
 - Listening to radio/cd/portable playback device
 - Adjusting radio/cd player
 - Adjusting climate controls
 - Using a device/controls integral to vehicle (specify): _____
 - Reading/adjusting navigation system
 - Eating or drinking
 - Smoking related
 - Retrieving fallen object (specify): _____
 - Internal focus, not specified
 - Focused on other internal object (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
18. Driver avoidance actions prior to impact
(Select all that apply)
- None
 - Braking
 - Steering left
 - Steering right
 - Accelerating
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
19. Did driver see struck non motorist prior to impact
(Select all that apply)
- No, never saw non motorist
 - Saw non motorist prior to entering vehicle
 - Saw non motorist after entering vehicle
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
20. Est time between start of backing and impact
- <2 or = 1 second
 - 2-5 seconds
 - 6-10 seconds
 - > 10 seconds
 - N/A
 - Unknown
21. Driver interior sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)
- Pillar
 - Headrest
 - Cargo
 - Other occupant
 - Other (specify) _____
 - Unknown
 - None
22. Recent experience driving this vehicle
- More than 10 times the last three months
 - 6-10 times the last three months
 - 2-5 times the last three months
 - Less than 2 times the last three months
 - First time driving this vehicle
 - N/A
 - Unknown
23. Frequency of driving in this parking lot/driveway
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Several times a month
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - First time in lot/driveway
 - N/A
 - Unknown
24. Driver Impairment
(Select all that apply)
- No drugs or alcohol present
 - Alcohol present (specify BAC): _____
 - Drugs present (specify): _____
 - Unknown
25. Source of alcohol/drug results
- Police reported
 - Medical record
 - Other (specify) _____
 - Not Tested
 - Unknown if tested



Non Motorist Form

1. Case Number

NON-MOTORIST PROFILE

2. Non-motorist's Age _____ Months
_____ Years
99 = Unknown

3. Non-motorist's Sex
 Male
 Female
 Unknown

4. Non-motorist's Height _____ cm
999 = Unknown

5. Non-motorist's Weight _____ kg
999 = Unknown

6. Medical outcome
 Not injured
 ER only
 Hospitalized 1-4 days
 Hospitalized 5 days or more
 Treatment later
 Fatal
 Unknown

7. Source of most severe injury
 Bumper
 Tire
 Undercarriage
 Other Specify: _____
 Ground
 N/A
 Unknown

8. Non-motorist impairment
(Select all that apply)
 No drugs or alcohol present
 Positive for alcohol (specify BAC): _____
 Positive for drugs (specify): _____
 Unknown

9. Source of alcohol/drug results
 Police reported
 Medical Report
 Other (specify) _____
 Not Tested
 Unknown if tested

NON-MOTORIST ACTIONS

10. Non-motorist attitude
 Standing
 Bending at waist
 Sitting
 Crouching
 Kneeling
 On skates/skateboard
 On bike/scooter
 Other (specify) _____
 Unknown

11. Non-motorist motion
 Not moving
 Walking slowly
 Walking rapidly
 Running or jogging
 Skipping/Hopping/Jumping
 Falling/Stumbling/Rising
 On skates/skateboard
 On bike/scooter
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

12. Non-motorist approach relative to rear of vehicle
 Stationary
 From left
 From right
 From behind
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

13. Non-motorist first avoidance action
 No avoidance actions
 Stopped
 Accelerated pace
 Ran away (along vehicle path)
 Jumped
 Turned away from vehicle
 Turned toward vehicle and braced
 Dove or fell away from vehicle
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

14. Non-motorist primary focus of attention
 Striking vehicle
 Play object
 Person
 Surrounding traffic
 Animal
 Handheld electronic (phone, MP3 player, etc.)
 Other Object (specify) _____
 Unknown

15. Were any other Non-motorists present?
(Select all that apply)
 Alone
 One adult present
 One other child present
 Multiple adults present
 Multiple children present
 Unknown

NON MOTORIST CLOTHING

NOTES:

- Specify Color, Fabric and Texture/Weight for outermost layer only
- Indicate "NONE" if applicable
- Available codes:

	<u>Colors</u>		<u>Fabrics</u>		<u>Textures</u>		<u>Weights</u>
Black	Charcoal gray		Natural		Soft		Heavy
Lt gray/silver	Brown		Synthetic		Slick		Medium
Gold/tan	Purple		Blend		Coarse		Light
Dark blue	Light blue						
Dark green	Light green						
Maroon	Red						
Orange	Yellow						
White	Other (specify)						

	Clothing	Color	Fabric	Texture	Weight
H E A D W E A R	Hat				
	Helmet				
	Hood				
	Other (specify): _____				
U P P E R B O D Y	Short Sleeve				
	Long Sleeve				
	Light Jacket				
	Heavy Jacket				
	Other (Specify): _____				
L O W E R B O D Y	Shorts				
	Pants				
	Shoes				
	Other (specify): _____				