

Tips to Help Your Pet Beat the Heat this Summer

During the hot Sacramento summer months, it is very important that pet owners take certain precautions to make sure their animals stay safe and cool this summer. Your pets depend on you!

- **Never leave your dog in a parked car:** Even a cracked window won't protect your pets from overheating. Temperatures can rise quickly and animals that are left even briefly can suffer heat-stroke. It is also against the law in California and could be punishable by a fine and/or additional sanctions.
- **Avoid extreme heat:** When temperatures get above the 90s, make sure that your pet is inside, especially during the midday and afternoon. If you keep your pet outdoors, be sure to provide them with plenty of fresh, cold water in a tip-proof water dish and shade for them to cool down.
- **Don't exercise with your pets when it is too hot:** Older and certain long-haired dogs can be particularly susceptible to heat, and hot asphalt can burn their paws. Exercise in the early morning or evenings and make sure both of you have plenty of water. It will be easier on both of you.
- **Use sunscreen:** Pets get sunburned just like people, and if your pet has light skin, they can be particularly susceptible to a painful burn. Use sunscreen on sensitive areas, such as ears or nose to make sure your pets are protected. Don't shave your pets in an effort to cool them off or you can be exposing skin that may burn easily.
- **Don't take your pets to crowded summer events:** The heat, noise, and crowds can be overwhelming to your pet. It is best to leave them at home in a quiet, cool environment.
- **Secure your dog during transport:** Make sure your dog is secured safely in your vehicle or tethered by a rope or chain in the bed of your truck to prevent the dog from falling or jumping from the vehicle. Transporting animals without properly securing the animal on a public highway or public roadway (exceptions for working dogs within agricultural or rural areas) is against the law in California and could be punishable by a fine and/or additional sanctions.
- **Be your pet's lifeguard:** While swimming can help some of your pets get exercise without overheating, always supervise your pets when swimming either in a pool or in area waterways. A dog could get tired swimming, particularly if it is in the river and must fight against currents.

If you pet has been exposed to high temperatures...

- Be alert for signs of heat stress including heavy panting, glazed eyes, a rapid pulse, unsteadiness, staggering gait, vomiting, or a deep red or purple tongue.
- Move your pet immediately to the shade to help lower their temperature immediately. Apply cool (not cold) water to the pet, apply ice packs and cool towels to your pet's head, neck, and chest.
- Take your pet to a veterinarian immediately. It could save their life.

Information gathered from the Dumb Friends League, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation. Updated 5/8/09.

