

# SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

## PETS SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

We all love spending the long, sunny days of summer outdoors with our pets, but long hot days can cause heat stroke or worse. To prevent your pet from overheating during the “dog days of summer”, be sure to take these simple precautions:

- Visit the vet for a spring or early-summer checkup. Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes, and mosquitoes thrive in the warm weather. Make sure your pets get tested for heartworm if they aren't on year-round preventative medication.
- Check your pet daily for fleas and ticks. It is important to apply flea and tick prevention to your pet monthly or as indicated on the specific product label of the product that is used. Fleas and ticks can cause anemia, carry other harmful parasites, as well as carry other diseases such as Lyme Disease. You may consider vaccinating your pet against Lyme Disease.
- Pets can get dehydrated quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot or humid outdoors. Make sure your pets have a shady place to get out of the sun, be careful not to over-exercise them, bring extra water for your pet while out on walks, and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.
- Know the symptoms of overheating in pets, which include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. Symptoms can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees.
- Animals with flat faces, like Pugs and Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight, and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.
- Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. The temperature inside your car may be much higher than it is outside, even with the windows cracked open. If an animal dies while left alone in a parked car and a law enforcement officer determines the animal was in distress, the responsible party may be charged with animal cruelty. If you discover an animal in a hot car by itself in distress, call the local police department. New Jersey does not allow breaking of vehicle windows without a police presence.
- Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool—not all dogs are good swimmers. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear flotation devices when on boats. Rinse your dog off after swimming to remove chlorine or salt from his fur, and try to keep your dog from drinking pool water, which contains chlorine and other chemicals.
- Open unscreened windows pose a danger to pets, who often fall out of them. Keep all unscreened windows or doors in your home closed, and make sure adjustable screens are tightly secured.
- Feel free to trim longer hair on your dog, but never shave your dog: The layers of dogs' coats protect them from overheating and sunburn. Brushing cats more often than usual can prevent problems caused by excessive heat. And be sure that any sunscreen or insect repellent product you use on your pets is labeled specifically for use on animals.

- When the temperature is very high, don't let your dog linger on hot asphalt. Being so close to the ground, their body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn. Keep walks during these times to a minimum.
- Commonly used rodenticides and lawn and garden insecticides can be harmful to cats and dogs if ingested, so keep them out of reach. Keep citronella candles, tiki torch products and insect coils out of pets' reach as well. Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435 if you suspect your pet has ingested a poisonous substance.
- Remember that food and drink commonly found at barbeques can be poisonous to pets. Keep alcoholic beverages away from pets, as they can cause intoxication, depression and comas. Similarly, remember that the snacks enjoyed by your human friends should not be a treat for your pet; any change of diet, even for one meal, may give your dog or cat severe digestive ailments. Avoid raisins, grapes, onions, chocolate and products with the sweetener xylitol.