



City of Los Angeles
Animal Services



Pet Safety in EXTREME Heat

According to composer George Gershwin, *Summertime* means “the livin’ is easy, fish are jumpin’, and the cotton is high”. This special season can also mean we need to protect our companion animals from extreme heat.

Keep in mind that when it is hot for you, it is even hotter for them. Dogs and cats do not sweat through their skin. They cool themselves by panting or rapid breathing, which means animals must work hard to stay cool.

Too much heat can be extremely dangerous or even fatal. If your best friend has a shorter nose, like Persian cats and bulldogs, he is more susceptible to heatstroke than breeds with longer noses.

If your dog or cat begins very rapid, noisy breathing, has trouble swallowing, and looks very distressed, she could be having a heatstroke. **Heatstroke is an emergency.** Get the animal out of the heat. Apply cold, wet towels to the back of the head. Place cold packs wrapped in towels or plain wet towels between the back legs and on the belly. Cool off your furry friend and then take her to the vet immediately.

The best plan is to keep your dog and cat protected from the summer heat.

- Always make sure that your dog or cat has plenty of fresh water to drink. A bucket that holds a gallon or more of water will stay cool longer than water in a shallow pan. Some dogs consider ice cubes a treat, and you can add a few to the water bowl.
- Dogs and cats do sweat a little through the pads of their feet. The cats I know do not appreciate water added to any part of their body, but dogs often enjoy having cool water on their feet. Some dogs enjoy walking through or even lying in a child's wading pool.
- It is dangerous to leave your dog or cat in a car for 5 minutes. If he cannot go inside at every stop with you, he is safer at home on hot days! Car interiors heat very quickly in the hot sun, even with the windows open. If it is 85 degrees outside, it will climb to 102 degrees inside your car within ten minutes. In half an hour, it will reach 120 degrees or more! If it is 90 degrees out, temperatures can top 160 degrees faster than you can walk around the block.
- While walking your dog outdoors, pay particular attention the hot pavement or sidewalks that make your dog's lower to the ground walking space hotter and can even burn their feet. Early morning and later evening walks will be more comfortable for you both!
- Animals who go outside need access to shade. Dark coats absorb heat. Lighter coated animals, especially white ones, are at higher risk for skin cancer from exposure to the sun and they are more susceptible to sunburn.



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- Longer coated dogs and cats who are brushed regularly have natural insulation from the heat. However, if the coat has gotten matted, a summer clip will make your buddy much more comfortable and allow you a new start at keeping him brushed. Remember, newly clipped animals can get sunburned.
- If your dog spends time in the yard, make sure she has access to shade. Shade trees, a covered patio, or a cool spot under the porch can help keep her comfortable.

Companion animals want to be with you. They will be safer and cooler inside with you, where they can spend their time doing what they do best: being your *best friend!*

Stay safe and enjoy the rest of your summer,

Brenda

Brenda Barnette
General Manager