

Pets in Hot Cars

Before taking a pet along with you on errands on a hot or sunny day, please consider the following and leave your pet at home.

The temperature in a car on a warm and humid day or in direct sunlight can exceed 120° in a matter of minutes—even with the windows partially open. Your pet can quickly suffer brain damage or die from heatstroke or suffocation. Young dogs, older dogs and dogs with short noses are very susceptible to heat stroke in a very short period of time. If the dog is ill or very excited, he/she may also be more susceptible to heat stroke.

If your pet is exposed to high temperatures in a car or any other location, look for signs of heat stress:

- heavy panting
- acting frantic, trying to catch breath
- glazed eyes
- a rapid pulse
- unsteadiness
- a staggering gait
- vomiting
- a deep red or purple tongue.

If your pet shows any of these signs, move him to a cooler area and take these emergency steps: Gradually lower his body temperature by applying cool (not cold) water all over his body or soaking him in a cool bath.

Place cool, wet towels over the back of the neck at the base of the skull, in the area under the front legs (armpits), and in the groin area. You may also wet the ear flaps and paws with cool water.

Direct a fan on the wet areas to speed evaporative cooling.

You may offer fresh, cool water if your pet is alert and wants to drink. Do not force your pet to drink.

Take your pet **immediately** to a veterinarian—it could save his/her life. Call ahead, if possible, to be sure a veterinarian is available.

Observing an Animal In a Hot Car

If you see an animal in a car on a warm and humid day in direct sunlight, call and make a report to the town police department or local humane agent immediately then take the following steps:

Get the vehicle's license plate number and enter the nearest store or business to request an emergency announcement be made about a pet left in a hot car.

Go back and wait for police at the vehicle.

New Hampshire Law

644:8-aa Animals in Motor Vehicle.

I. It shall be cruelty to confine an animal in a motor vehicle or other enclosed space in which the temperature is either so high or so low as to cause serious harm to the animal. "Animal" means a domestic animal, household pet, or wild animal held in captivity.

II. Any person in violation of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor as set forth in RSA 644:8.

III. Any law enforcement officer or agent of a licensed humane organization may take action necessary to rescue a confined animal endangered by extreme temperatures, and to remove the threat of further serious harm.

IV. No officer or agent taking action under paragraph III shall be liable for damage reasonably necessary to rescue the confined animal.

Recommendations from
The Governor's Commission
on the Humane Treatment of Animals
www.nh.gov/humane

