

Hot Weather and Pets

Things to remember

Before you leave, buy a temporary tag to place on your pet's collar with your friend's address and contact number. A simple luggage tag is a good idea for this. It means that if something happens and you are uncontactable, someone known to you and your pet will be able to be called and contacted.

During the warmer months we must pay particular attention to the needs of our pets. Dogs and cats have a very different thermostat to that of humans. When temperatures are above 30 degrees, pet owners who don't provide appropriate shelter and water can expect to see signs of great distress in their cat or dog and in extreme cases, this can lead to death.

The AWL recommends your pets have:

- Constant access to clean cool water; ice in their water buckets; a few water bowls in different places
- Always provide more than one drinking bowl on hot days in case one gets tipped over and have the bowls in shade so the water can stay as cool as possible
- Shade and shelter from the sun and winds even if you have provided a kennel, it must be in a shaded place
- Keep your pets inside preferably with windows and blinds closed to keep out the hot sun.
- Provide a small paddle pool for your dogs and a couple of cold, wet towels on the floor inside for your cat to cool down on if required.
- Freeze large ice cubes (water in ice cream containers) and give to your dog to lick and gnaw on. This helps to keep them cool and hydrated.
- Put ice blocks into their water (even in the cat's water bowl inside).
- NEVER leave your pet inside a car on days of extreme heat. Outside temperatures can almost double inside a closed vehicle in a matter of seconds.
- Don't take your animal out for a walk until after the sun has gone down - the ground is still very hot and will burn their paws

On extremely hot days

- Put wet towels down for your pets
- Freeze containers of water to make big iceblocks for them to play with and chew on
- For dogs especially, freeze their dinner to make 'PALcicles'
- Dogs that like to play with tennis balls etc must not be over exercised, limit play to short periods
- Most animals just relax and sleep in the heat - they may be grumpy so give them lots of time out. Instruct children to also allow them to rest
- Dogs pant to regulate their body temperature they sweat through their paws and tongue.
- Cats are a lot more tolerant to heat, so if a cat starts to pant they will certainly be close to overheating so you must act fast ... wrap them in a cool, wet towel until they start to cool down,
- then seek veterinary advice.

