**HOT AND COLD WEATHER TIPS FOR YOUR PETS**

**BASIC SUMMER SAFTEY**

**Never leave your pets in a parked car, van or truck!** **Not even for a minute!** Not even with the vehicle running and the air conditioner on. On a hot day, the temperature in a car can reach 160 degrees in a matter of minutes – even with the windows partially open. Your pet can quickly suffer brain damage, irreversible organ damage or die from heat stroke or suffocation.

Beating the heat is extra tough for dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and sweating through their paw pads. Don’t carry your dog in the bed of a pickup truck. This is always dangerous, but the heat brings the added danger of burning the dog’s feet on the hot metal. The same can be said for your pet walking or standing on hot asphalt. If the asphalt is too hot for your bare feet, then it’s too hot for your dog’s feet!

Any time your pet is outside, make sure he/she has protection from the heat and sun and has plenty of fresh, cool water. Tree shade and tarps are ideal because they don’t obstruct air flow. A doghouse does not provide relief from heat – in fact, it makes it worse. On hot days, a doghouse can become a sauna.

And, NEVER chain your pet!

Many times you think about summer as being the time for hot temperatures and even hotter vehicle interiors because of the hot temperatures outside, but leaving your pet in a parked vehicle is just as dangerous in the spring and fall seasons as it is in the summer season. A mild 72 degrees can cause the interior temperature of your car to reach 105 degrees in just a matter of minutes. 85 degrees and the inside of your car can heat up to 120 degrees in minutes. Full blown heat stroke can occur at the temperature of 108 degrees.

It is important to remember that it is not just the ambient temperature but also the humidity that can affect your pet. Animals pant to evaporate moisture from their lungs, which takes heat away from their body. If the humidity is too high, they are unable to cool themselves and their temperature will skyrocket to dangerous levels, very quickly!

Animals are at particular risk for heatstroke if they are very old, very young, overweight, not conditioned to prolonged exercise, or have heart or respiratory disease. Some breeds of dogs – like Boxers, Pugs, Pekinese, Shih Tzus, Lhasapsos and other dogs and cats with short muzzles – will have a much harder time breathing in extreme heat.

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE

Some signs of heat stroke are heavy panting, or the sudden stopping of panting, a rapid or erratic heartbeat, glazed eyes, anxious or staring expression, difficulty breathing, excessive thirst, lethargy, weakness and muscle tremors, dizziness, lack of coordination, profuse salivation, seizure, convulsions or vomiting, a deep red or purple tongue and unconsciousness, which can lead to coma and death.

If you think that your pet may be suffering from heat stroke, **immediately** move the animal to a cool, shady place and call your veterinarian! Wet the animal with cool (not cold) water. Fan vigorously to promote evaporation. This process will cool the blood, which reduces the dog’s core temperature. Or apply cold, damp towels to the head, neck and chest. Wet the ear flaps and paws with cool water, too. Do not apply ice as this constricts blood flow which will inhibit cooling. Allow the animal to drink some cool water if he/she will take it. Then, take the animal to your veterinarian as soon as possible for further treatment. This action could save his/her life!

**BASIC WINTER SAFETY**

**Never leave your pet alone in a vehicle during cold weather!** A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.

In spite of their fur coat, dogs can get cold, especially in confined spaces such as car interiors, where they can’t be active to generate body heat. Small dogs and puppies get cold faster than adult or bigger dogs because they have less body mass. Most cars are poorly insulated and the interior gets hot quickly in the summer and cold quickly in the winter. A closed car offers protection in the cold as a windbreak, not a thermal barrier.

If a car were sealed and insulated well enough to stay warm in the winter, air quality would become an issue. Dogs need oxygen and that could run out pretty quickly in such a small space. Carbon dioxide build up could become lethal. If the

car is ventilated well enough to prevent this, then the cold would come in with the air and we’re back to where we started.

SOME COLD WEATHER TIPS

Never let your dog off leash on snow or ice. Dogs can lose their scent and become lost. More companion dogs are lost during the winter than any other season, so make sure yours always wears ID tags.

Thoroughly wipe off your dog’s legs and stomach when he/she comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. He/she can ingest salt, antifreeze or other chemicals while licking his/her paws and their paws may bleed from encrusted snow or ice.

Like coolant, antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle and consider using products that contain less toxic propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.

If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only to relieve himself.

Keep your cat inside. Outdoors, cats can freeze, become lost or be stolen, injured or killed. Cats who are allowed to stray are exposed to infectious diseases, including rabies, from other cats, dogs and wildlife.

During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.

Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is

paws-itively purr-fect!!