

At times I feel like a broken record, but here I am again with my annual, "don't leave your dog in the car on a warm day" warning.

Every year I assist police agencies with the rescue of dogs from vehicles parked on hot days while owners shop. One case that always stands out was a young, Dachshund puppy who was frantically panting, with dazed eyes, lying on the floor of the vehicle. If we were not made aware of the dog in the vehicle and not remove her when we did, I don't think she would have survived. Another case we did not make it to in time was a Labrador mix that had suffocated from the heat inside the owner's car before we even got to the scene.

Dogs often enjoy going in the car on errands with their owner. Now that the warmer weather is here, taking the family pet along can expose him to the danger of heat prostration. It takes only minutes for a pet left in a vehicle on a warm day to succumb to heat stroke and suffocation.

Most people don't realize how hot it can get in a parked car on a balmy day.

However on a 75 degree day the temperature in a car parked in the shade can exceed 90 degree's---and hit a scorching 160 degree's if parked in the sun!

Even when the outside temperature is in the 60's, temperatures inside some vehicles cab can reach the danger zone on bright sunny days.

Animals are not able to sweat like humans do. Dogs cool themselves by panting and by sweating only through their paws. If they have only overheated air to breathe, animals can collapse, suffer brain damage and possibly die of heatstroke. Just 15 minutes can be enough for an animal's body temperature to climb from normal 102.5 to deadly levels that will damage the nervous and cardiovascular systems, often leaving the animal comatose, dehydrated and at risk of permanent impairment or death.

People don't place their animals in jeopardy on purpose. They think they will run their errands in a short time. Yet, weather conditions can change rapidly. A sky that is overcast when a dog owner goes into the supermarket can become sunny moments later.

Similarly, a car left in the shade may be exposed to hot sun after owner enters the store. Sometimes a quick errand turns into half an hour waiting on the checkout line. Heat prostration claims the lives of thousands of dogs each year.

It's a cruel death and one that can be devastating to a pet owner.

With warm weather upon us, the family dog should be left in the safety of the home.

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