

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2013

## **Summer has arrived!**

*Safety tips & heat relief ideas to keep your pet cool*

**Los Angeles, CA** – It seems summer has finally made an appearance in Southern California. Temperatures have been sweltering and now weather forecasters are advising Los Angelinos to brace themselves for even *hotter* days and nights. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (**spcaLA**) reminds people: do NOT leave pets or children unattended in cars. Not only is it illegal, it can also be deadly.

California Penal Code 597.7 states it is illegal to “leave or confine an animal in any unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal due to heat...” This law also authorizes the proper authority to “take all steps that are reasonably necessary for the removal of an animal from a motor vehicle, including, but not limited to, breaking into the motor vehicle...”

On a hot day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar up to 160 degrees. This temperature is hot enough to cause heat stroke and permanent brain damage in children or pets. Dogs and cats’ normal temperatures are several degrees higher than those of humans. Animals confined in a car, yard, or dog run, with no protection from the heat and without ample water are more susceptible to heat stroke than humans.

Dogs with flat faces (like Pugs or English Bulldogs), obese dogs, and ones with heavy coats have an even greater risk of overheating. It is important to realize that just like humans, not all dogs deal with heat the same way. Dogs do not sweat-- they lose heat through their tongues, noses, and footpads.

If you see an animal overheating in a locked vehicle, take down the make, model, and license plate and have the owner paged in nearby shops. Contact the local police department immediately.

Heat relief ideas:

- Ice trays: Freeze stock into ice cubes for your dog to lick or freeze a treat in each ice cube. Cats enjoy chasing slippery ice cubes, too.
- Kiddie Pools: Fill a kiddie pool with water and let your dog splash. Toss a few of the ice cube treats in the water for him to hunt for.
- Frozen Pops: Make your dog a delicious frozen treat to enjoy. Pumpkin Pops and Frozen Monkey treat recipes are available on the [spcaLA website](http://www.spcaLA.com).
- For cats: Daily brushing, cooling your cat with damp towels, or adding a few ice cubes to the water bowl can help keep them cool. Allow your cat to find a cool spot in the home, such as cool bathroom tiles or the bathtub.

-MORE-

PAGE 2-2-2

spcaLA urges people to follow these hot weather tips for pets to prevent a tragedy from occurring:

- Keep plenty of clean, cool drinking water available at all times for your pet, including when traveling. If your pets are left alone during the day, ensure that their bowl is tip-proof.
- Keep your pet at home. Never leave your pet in a parked car, not even for a minute.
- Protect your pet from the sun. If your pet must stay in the yard (instead of the cool indoors which is recommended) be sure there is adequate shade and ventilation, in addition to plenty of water.
- Keep pets groomed. To help your pet stay cool, clip coats short, but not shaved. Sunburn is a danger to animals, especially light-colored animals. Apply regular sun block to vulnerable areas such as the ears and nose.
- Dog pads burn easily, so avoid hot surfaces such as asphalt on hot days. Exercise pets in the morning or evening when it is cooler. After hiking, make sure to check for fox tails and other burns, as these can cause major problems.
- If a pet is overcome by heat (detected by excessive panting, heavily salivating, and/or immobility) immerse him or her slowly in cool water to lower body temperature, and then go to a veterinarian. Never immerse a pet in ice cold water, as it may cause shock.

Include pets in your disaster plans. Prepare them by setting aside an emergency bag with supplies like food, bowls, treats, medicines, leash, collar, and a soft muzzle.

*For more information, please contact Ana Bustilloz at 323-730-5300 x252, cell 323-707-1271 or [abustilloz@spcaLA.com](mailto:abustilloz@spcaLA.com)*

**Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.**

###