

# DOGS DIE IN HOT CARS

'not long' is too long...





**LEAVING A WINDOW OPEN WON'T KEEP YOUR CAR COOL ENOUGH**

## **DON'T TAKE THE RISK...**

The image on the front of this leaflet is a recreation of a real life incident in which a couple who had been shopping returned to find their dog had died.

Nobody ever thinks it's going to happen to them or their much loved pet, yet every year many people still gamble with their dog's life and every summer dogs die in hot cars.

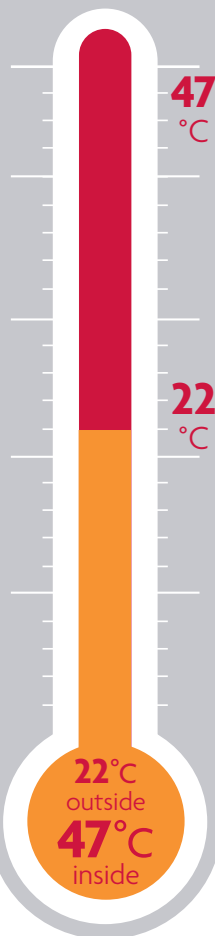
Many people still believe that it's ok to leave a dog in a car on a warm day if the windows are left open or they are parked in the shade. The truth is it's still very dangerous and while not every dog left in this situation will die, at the very least, they are likely to experience distress, discomfort and anxiety.

Just put yourself in their place and ask yourself how you'd feel about being trapped in a hot car and just how unpleasant and frightening it would be.

**NOBODY EVER THINKS IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEM**

**A car can become an oven very quickly even when it doesn't feel that warm.**

When it's **22°C** outside – within an hour – the temperature in a car can reach an unbearable **47°C**.





## WHAT IS HEATSTROKE?

If dogs are too hot and are unable to reduce their body temperature by panting, they will develop heatstroke which can kill.

Some types of dog are even more prone to heatstroke, like very old or young dogs, dogs with thick, heavy coats or dogs with very short, flat faces – like pugs and bulldog types. Dogs with certain diseases or on some types of medication are also more prone to heatstroke.



## SIGNS OF HEATSTROKE

- Is the dog panting heavily?
- Is the dog drooling excessively?
- Does the dog appear lethargic, drowsy or uncoordinated?
- Is the dog collapsed or vomiting?

If you see a dog in a hot car displaying any signs of heatstroke, dial 999 immediately as the dog could soon lose consciousness and experience internal organ failure.



## EMERGENCY FIRST AID

For the best chance of survival, dogs suffering from heatstroke urgently need to have their body temperature lowered gradually.

- Move the dog to a shaded/cool area.
  - Immediately pour small amounts of room temperature (not cold) water onto the dog's body to avoid shock. If possible, you can also use wet towels or place the dog in the breeze of a fan.
  - Allow the dog to drink small amounts of cool water.
  - Continue to pour small amounts of room temperature water onto the dog until their breathing starts to settle but never so much that they begin to shiver.
- Once the dog is cool, take them to the nearest veterinary surgery immediately.

IF YOU SEE A DOG IN DISTRESS IN A **HOT CAR**

DIAL  
**999**

# IF YOU SEE A DOG IN A CAR ON A HOT DAY:



Establish the dog's health/condition.



What is the dog doing – are they panting or drooling?



If the dog is displaying ANY signs of heatstroke – dial 999 immediately.

- If the situation becomes critical for the dog and the police are too far away/unable to attend, many people's instinct will be to break into the car to free the dog. If you decide to do this, please be aware that, without proper justification, it could be classed as criminal damage and you may need to be prepared to defend your actions in court.
- Make sure you tell the police what you intend to do and why, and take images/footage of the dog and the names and numbers of witnesses to the incident. The law states that you have a lawful excuse to commit damage if you believe that the owner of the property that you damage would consent to the damage if they knew the circumstances (section 5(2)(a) Criminal Damage Act 1971).
- If the dog is removed from the car displaying signs of heatstroke, follow the emergency first aid advice overleaf. This could be the difference between life and death for the dog.

It can be hard to know what to do in this situation. Many people's immediate reaction is to call the RSPCA, or other welfare organisations, but in an emergency, RSPCA inspectors may not be able to attend quickly enough and – because they have no powers of entry – they would still need police assistance.

**Don't be afraid to dial 999, the police deal with hundreds of such incidents each year.**

**The police will inform the RSPCA of the incident if animal welfare assistance is/ may be required.**

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## IF THE DOG IS NOT DISPLAYING SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Establish how long the dog has been in the car – is there a 'pay and display' ticket showing a start/expiry time?
- Make a note of the registration number of the car. If the owner returns but you still feel the situation was dangerous for the dog, you may wish to report the incident to the police.
- If you're at a superstore/venue ask the staff to make an announcement on the tannoy or public address system to alert the owner of the situation. If possible, get someone to stay with the dog to monitor their condition. If the dog begins to display signs of distress/heatstroke, make sure they're prepared to dial 999.
- You can also call the RSPCA cruelty line for advice on what to do at any time – **0300 1234 999** – but please be aware that if the situation is dangerous for the dog, dialing 999 should always be the first step.

## IF YOU SEE A DOG IN DISTRESS IN A HOT CAR

**DIAL  
999**