



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

ChristieLyn Diller

Dir. of Marketing & Communications

202-695-0080

cdiller@washhumane.org

Extreme Heat Kills Pets

Washington Humane Society Urges Public Not to Leave Dogs in Cars

Washington, DC (July 17, 2013) – With temperatures in the high 90s right now, a heat wave can be lethal to companion animals, particularly dogs left in cars.

Each year dogs will die because they have been left in hot cars while their owners go off to do errands. The Washington Humane Society (WHS) is urging the public to be responsible and not travel with pets, unless absolutely necessary. A dog's core body temperature is naturally higher than a human's; they will suffer the effects of the heat much faster. Even if you don't think it's too hot outside – it is!

“Pet owners need to know it is a crime to leave your dog inside a hot car. It has been a very hot summer and we want the public to be aware that dogs – or any pets – can die of heat exhaustion,” Monica DiGiandomenico, WHS Humane Law Enforcement Officer states.

WHS Humane Law Enforcement Officers are responding to two to four daily regarding dogs left in cars. While WHS Officers will respond to each call, this crisis can be easily avoided if pet owners took more responsible action and left pets at home, allowing Officers to dedicate their resources to the myriad of calls received each day.

WHS offers these critical travel tips to keep pets safe in the heat wave:

1. There must be air flow in your vehicle at all times. Keeping windows cracked or leaving water out will not help if the car is not moving, and there is no air flow. Lack of air will kill animals.
2. Dogs with pushed in faces (like Bulldogs, Boston Terriers, and Pugs) are particularly at risk. These types of dogs generally have more difficulty breathing, but all pet guardians should be on alert. Young and old dogs alike are affected differently by being in a hot car.
3. Keep your dog at home. It doesn't take long for your car to become an oven. Owners might think they are doing the right thing by bringing their pet with them in the car due to separation anxiety, or other factors, but this puts dogs at risk of dying.

4. If you must travel with a pet – prepare. Before you get in, roll down the windows and put the air conditioner on to get the air circulating.

If you see a dog alone in car, immediately notify the Washington Humane Society at (202) 576-6664, or call 911.

With summer season upon us, don't let sightseeing trips or errands turn deadly. If you see a pet owner leaving their dog in the car unattended, express your concern.

Signs of over-heating in animals include loud, rapid panting, rapid pulse, glazed eyes, excessive salivation, elevated body temperature, excessive whining or agitation, staring, vomiting and white or bluish gums. Pets can be cooled immediately by placing them in the shade and sponging them with cool water, especially on the head, feet and groin area. If you believe your pet is suffering from heat exhaustion, contact your veterinarian immediately—it could save your pet's life.

###

The Washington Humane Society (WHS) is the only Congressionally-chartered animal welfare agency in the United States and has been the leading voice for animals in the District of Columbia since 1870. WHS provides protection and care to nearly 30,000 animals each year through its broad range of programs and services including: sheltering, adoption, humane law enforcement, spay and neuter, humane education, human – animal rehabilitation programs, and lost and found services. For more information, please visit www.washhumane.org.