

Summer Safety Tips for Your Furry Best Friends

Summers are beautiful in North Idaho, and as much as we enjoy this time of year, it can be hard on pets at times.

Here are some summer safety tips to keep in mind:

Don't assume your dog can swim well

Just because dogs instinctively know how to swim, doesn't mean they're good swimmers. If you and your dog enjoy water activities on the lake, like boating, kayaking, and paddle boarding, it's a good idea to have Fido wear a doggie life jacket, even if he is a good swimmer.

Remember that food and drink commonly found at barbeques can be poisonous to pets

Keep alcoholic beverages away from pets, as they can cause intoxication, depression and comas. Avoid raisins, grapes, onions, chocolate and products with the sweetener xylitol (if you give your dog peanut butter, check the label some have xylitol in them).

Lawn, garden, and auto risks

Commonly used rodenticides and lawn & garden insecticides can be harmful to cats and dogs if ingested. Keep them out of reach. Antifreeze is something to watch out for year round, cars tend to overheat more and leak antifreeze during the summer. Small amounts are very poisonous to dogs and cats. Be attentive when walking your dog or letting your outdoor cat roam. Call your veterinarian if you suspect your animal has ingested a poisonous substance.

Dogs get sunburns too!

Dogs with short or light-colored coats are especially susceptible. And just like with people, sunburns can be painful for a dog and overexposure to the sun can lead to skin cancer. Talk to your veterinarian about sunscreens for your dog (don't assume a sunscreen for people is appropriate for your dog).

Keep your dog's paws cool

When the sun is cooking, try to keep your pet off of hot asphalt; not only can it burn paws, it can also increase body temperature and lead to overheating.

Be on the lookout at lakes and ponds

Avoid lakes and ponds with blue-green algae, signified by scummy water and a foul odor. Algae can produce a toxin that may cause severe sickness or seizures quickly if your pet ingests the water, by either drinking from the lake or licking tainted fur.

Your dog should always have access to fresh drinking water and shade

Dogs get much thirstier than we do when they get hot, and other than panting and drinking, they really have no way to cool themselves down.

Never leave your pets in a parked car

Not even for a minute. Not even with the car running and air conditioner on. You may think leaving your pet in a car for a few minutes is no big deal, but it can quickly lead to heat stroke in dogs and cats. In bright sunshine, your car acts like an oven, becoming much hotter inside than the outside air. In fact, on a sunny 70 degree day, your car can heat up to over 100 degrees within minutes. So, either take your pet with you or leave him or her at home during shopping trips.

Limit exercise on hot days

Take care when exercising your pet. Adjust intensity and duration of exercise in accordance with the temperature. On very hot days, limit exercise to early morning or evening hours, and be especially careful with short-nosed pets, who typically have difficulty breathing. Always carry water with you to keep your dog from dehydrating.

Leave pets at home when you head out to Fourth of July celebrations

Never use fireworks around pets. Exposure to lit fireworks can potentially result in severe burns or trauma, and even unused fireworks can contain hazardous materials. Many pets are fearful of loud noises and can become lost, scared and disoriented, so it's best to keep your pets safe from the noise in a quiet, sheltered, and escape-proof area of your home.

Safe Travels

Unfamiliar surroundings can be unsettling to your pup. Summertime can mean travel with new places to explore. Keep your dog on a leash in a new environment. If you're traveling, take your vet's contact info with you. A collar with identity tags is good protection in case the pet gets lost, but a microchip is even better.

Should your pet become lost in our area, or if you find a pet, please call PAS at (208)265-7297, ext. 100. Also, Facebook is an outstanding tool to help lost pets; post a photo and information on our Facebook page where it will be shared by others in the community. Also, pets can be listed on our Lost & Found directory on our website, located under "Services."

By being aware of summer hazards, you and your pet(s) can enjoy a carefree and fun-filled season.

