

Summer Safety For Family Pets

Imagine not being able to shed your winter clothes on a hot summer day and your only means of cooling off is by panting. Dogs and cats have little choice when it comes to keeping cool in summer heat. Make sure your pets have shade and water. Don't leave your pets in a parked car for any period of time! On a warm day, even with the windows cracked open, the temperature in a car can reach 120° in a matter of minutes.

Heatstroke

Recognizing the signs of heatstroke in your dog or cat allows for prompt treatment. Signs include body temperatures of 104°-110°F degrees, excessive panting, and dark or bright red tongue and gums. If you suspect heat stroke in your pet, seek veterinary attention immediately! Use cool water, not ice water, to cool your pet. Offer ice cubes for the animal to lick on until you can reach your veterinarian.

Water Safety

Not all dogs are excellent swimmers. Especially if Fido has underlying health problems, such as heart disease or obesity. Consider protecting your pet just as your human family -- with a life preserver. If your pet falls off the boat or raft or is tired/cold from choppy water, a life jacket could be what saves your pet's life. Always remember to supervise a pet in a pool, too.

Antifreeze & Fertilizer

Antifreeze is a year-round hazard. With the warmer temperatures of summer, cars overheat and may leak antifreeze. It tastes sweet and is inviting to pets (and children). It's also extremely toxic in very small amounts.

Summer is the time people fertilize their lawns and work in their gardens. Beware: plant food, fertilizer and insecticides can be fatal if your pet ingests them. More than 700 plants can produce physiologically active or toxic substances in sufficient amounts to cause harmful effects in animals.

Summer Travel

It's dangerous to drive with a dog in the back of a pick-up truck. Not only can flying debris cause serious injury, but a dog may be thrown into traffic if the driver suddenly hits the brakes, swerves or is hit by another car. Dogs should ride in the cab (in a crate or wearing a seat belt harness designed for dogs) or in a secured crate in the bed of the truck.

Make sure your pet is always wearing a collar and identification tag. If you are separated from your pet, an ID tag may very well be his or her ticket home.

Ask the Owner

Before you pet or approach a dog on a leash, ask the owner's permission. Not all dogs are friendly or good with small children. With people and dogs spending more time outside, dog bites are likely to increase in the summer months. Spaying or neutering your dog reduces the likelihood that he will bite and provides many other health benefits.

AJ's Tails & Trails

The Kootenai Humane Society sponsors AJ's Tails and Trails, 5K Dog Walk/Run on May 20 at 9:15 a.m. The event begins at North Idaho College, goes along the Centennial Trail and back to the college. Awards, contests with your dog, prizes, food and music. Vendor booths with pet-related merchandise are also featured. Everyone is welcome to participate or attend the event at North Idaho College. 772-4019.

“Forty-Six percent of all households in Coeur d'Alene own dogs. There may be more dogs than kids.”

Kootenai Humane Society

The Kootenai Humane Society has served Kootenai County for 30 years. A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the welfare of all animals, KHS shelters animals that are neglected, abused and abandoned. All animals are spayed or neutered, vaccinated and wormed. They are a no-kill facility, maintaining the highest possible standards of care for the animals until they are adopted.

Special programs include:

Foster Care – Cats and dogs are nurtured in foster homes until they are old enough or well enough to be adopted.

Hearts of Gold – When an injured animal needs medical care beyond our budget, special advocates assist with the cost.

Share A Little Love – Receive a Very Important Pet (VIP) card with a donation of \$25 or more. This entitles a discount at various pet-related businesses.

Adopt A Cage – Assist in direct care of the animals as well as purchasing and maintaining dog and cat cages.

Guardian Angel – Assist with adoption fees to help an animal become adopted.

Pet Therapy For Seniors – Therapy dogs visit senior citizens facilities to enhance their lives.

Safe Haven For Pets – A partnership with the Women's Center to provide temporary foster care for the animals (including farm animals) of victims that are fleeing domestic violence.

Humane Education – Therapy dogs visit classrooms, teaching empathy, compassion and better pet ownership to children. Community-wide education is provided about the animal cruelty/domestic violence link and the role it plays in early detection of animal, child and spousal abuse.

There are many opportunities for anyone wanting to volunteer... walking dogs, cat cuddling, reception desk assistance, etc. The Kootenai Humane Society is open 7 days a week M-F noon to 6 pm, Sat and Sun noon to 4 pm. 11650 N. Ramsey Road, by the Coeur d'Alene airport. 772-4019 or www.kootenaihumanesociety.com