

FAQS: PROTECTING TEXAS DOGS FROM EXTREME HEAT

As temperatures continue rising during the Texas summer, it's not just us humans who feel the impact of the scorching sun. Our four-legged companions are equally susceptible to the dangers of extreme heat. Just like we take precautions to stay safe and comfortable during hot weather, it is vital to remember that our pets rely on us to protect them from summer's perils.

The Safe Outdoor Dogs Act passed in 2021 protects dogs tethered outdoors by:

- Defining adequate shelter to shield dogs from extreme temperatures and standing water, and ensures the dog can stand, turn around, and lie down.
- Requiring access to drinkable water.

What do I do if I see an outdoor dog with no shelter?

If you see a dog in a back yard without any water or shelter and there are heat advisory warnings, you can ask your local animal control to do a welfare check. Never confine an animal to a crate in direct sunlight without shade or during inclement weather. Doing so could rise to the level of animal cruelty.

What is the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke?

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion typically occurs when a dog's body becomes overheated due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures or excessive physical activity in hot conditions.

Signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Excessive panting and drooling
- Rapid/irregular heartbeat
- Lethargy or weakness
- Loss of coordination
- Gum color change: bright red gums and tongue
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Glazed eyes
- Elevated body temperature, typically not exceeding 104°F (40°C)

Heat Stroke

A heat stroke is a severe form of heat-related illness that occurs when a dog's body temperature rises to dangerous levels, overwhelming its ability to cool down.

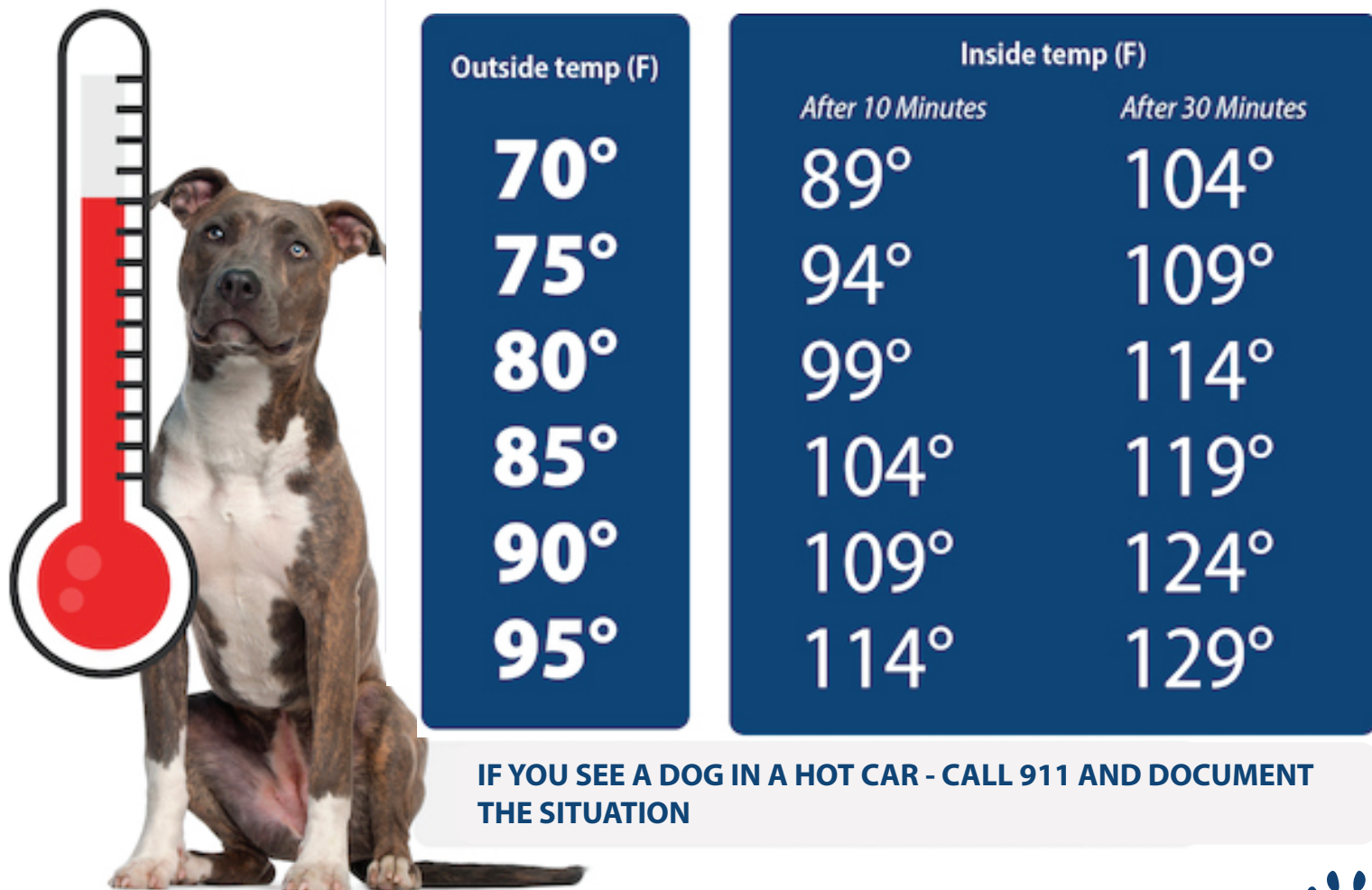
Signs of heat stroke include all the symptoms of heat exhaustion but are often more severe. Heatstroke is characterized by a body temperature >104°F (40°C) and can reach as high as 106°F (41°C) or more. Additionally, dogs with heat stroke may experience collapse, seizures, loss of consciousness, or coma.

What do I do if I see a dog in a hot car?

1. **Assess the situation.** Determine the severity of the dog's condition by asking the following:
 - A. Where is the car parked? Under direct sunlight?
 - B. What is the current temperature outside?
 - C. Is the dog showing signs of stress and symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke?
 - D. Is the owner nearby?
2. **Act quickly:** Time is crucial in these situations, as the temperature inside a parked car can rise rapidly. On a warm day, the temperature inside a vehicle can increase by 20°F (11°C) within just 10 minutes.
3. **Notify authorities:** Contact local law enforcement or animal control to report the situation. Ensure you have the exact location, description of the car, and license plate number, if possible.
4. **Document the situation:** Take photos or videos of the dog in the car as evidence. This can be helpful for authorities.
5. **Spread awareness:** Notify nearby businesses or individuals about the situation to raise awareness and potentially locate the car's owner. They may be able to make an announcement or assist in finding the owner.
6. **Continue to monitor the dog:** If you can, stay near the car to keep an eye on the dog until help arrives. Note any changes in its condition and update the authorities when they come.

HOW HOT IS TOO HOT? DON'T LEAVE YOUR PETS IN HOT CARS

Cars can heat to dangerous levels quickly, even if outside temperatures are comfortable. In minutes, car temperatures are deadly!



Can my dog's paws get burned?

Yes! Your dog's paw pads are tough, but they are not shoes. Dogs' paw pads are sensitive and can quickly burn on hot pavement. Asphalt and concrete can heat up significantly, especially on hot summer days. Walking on such surfaces can cause painful burns and blisters on your dog's paws.

How can I protect my dog's paws?

Take these precautions when walking your dog during hot weather:

- **Test the pavement:** If you can't comfortably hold your palm on the pavement for 10 seconds, then your dog's paws risk getting burnt. If it's too hot for you, it's too hot for your dog!
- **Walk during cooler times:** Schedule walks during the early morning or late evening when the pavement is cooler. Avoid walking during the hottest parts of the day.
- **Use protective gear:** Use booties or paw wax to provide a barrier between their paws and the hot surface.
- **Walk on grass or shaded areas:** To minimize the risk of burns, choose grassy or shaded routes instead of hot pavement.

What about grooming my dog?

Although a dog's coat keeps them warm, it protects **against** the sun's harmful rays. Dogs **can get sunburned** on any part of their body. However, it's much more common in areas with thin or no fur. Always consult a professional dog groomer who can provide specific trimming suggestions based on your dog's breed. Explore alternatives, such as using cooling wraps or mats to help them stay cool.

Am I protected from liability if I aid a dog suffering a heat-related illness?

Yes! In 2011, THLN passed HB 2471 by Rep. Larry Phillips and Sen. Robert Deuell, which limits the civil liability of a person, an animal control agency, or an animal control agency employee who renders aid to an injured or distressed animal from a civil action brought because of seeking or providing such care.

Remember, by adopting preventive measures and incorporating simple but effective safety practices, we can create a safer environment for our furry friends and offer them the care they deserve during these extreme weather conditions.



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