



The Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division Reminds Pet Owners to Be Safe During the Summer; Tethering, Leaving Pets in Vehicles, Can Have Deadly Repercussions and It's Against the Law

Montgomery County summers always include multiple days when temperatures soar, there's increased humidity, thunderstorms, and high heat index values. When there is high humidity during the day, that also means that temperatures will be slow to cool at night. The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) staff reminds pet owners that this time of year presents several hazards to pets and that pet owners should be especially vigilant during summer months.

Tethering

During times of extreme weather, including high temperatures, the Director of the Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division, Thomas Koenig, can enforce Executive Regulation 17-17, Anti-Cruelty Conditions for Dogs, Section D, which states, "A person must not tether a dog under circumstances that endanger its health, safety, or well-being, including: unattended tethering of a dog during a weather emergency." When the County issues a Hyperthermia Alert (heat and/or heat indices forecast above 95 degrees) Section 4.0 advises that animals should not be left outdoors. Regulation 17-17 will be enforced as long as and/or whenever, the Weather Service issues an Excessive Heat Warning. At all times, owners are required to provide outdoor (non-tethered) dogs with proper shelter and protection from the elements.

Pets in Vehicles

During the summer temperatures frequently rise to record levels. Pets left unattended in vehicles are particularly vulnerable to heat-related injuries. On an 85-degree day, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach 102 degrees within 10 minutes, even with the windows cracked. If the vehicle is parked in direct sunlight, the temperature inside may rise up to 40 degrees an hour. Pets are in danger of heat-stroke at 110



degrees. Dogs, frequently left unattended in vehicles, can suffer brain and organ damage after just 15 minutes.

Under Chapter 5, 201(a) (13), pet owners can be issued a civil citation with a penalty of \$500 for leaving an animal unattended in a motor vehicle. In addition, pet owners may also face the possibility that their pet could be removed from the vehicle and the owner charged criminally with animal cruelty under the Maryland Criminal Law 10-604.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can be dangerous, even fatal, for pets. In many cases it can be prevented by keeping them indoors, in shaded areas, providing them with plenty of water, etc. Heat exhaustion can quickly progress into heat stroke which can be fatal; therefore it is important for pet owners to know the symptoms (which are similar for both dogs and cats):

- Restlessness
- Panting
- Increased respiratory rate
- Increased heart rate
- Excess salivation
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Thunderstorms

Animals may become extremely frightened during a thunderstorm and can escape an enclosure, such as a fenced yard. Pet owners should take animals inside during violent wind and rain storms. Pet owners should also keep the necessary identification on their pets' collars for situations when they may become separated. Montgomery County Executive Regulation 05-01 requires pet owners bring their pets indoors or provide shelter to protect them from the elements.



Anyone that is concerned that an animal is in immediate danger should call 9-1-1. To have an Animal Services Officer Dispatched in a non-emergency situation, patrons can call 301-279-8000. More information about Montgomery County Animal Control Laws can be found at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/asd/laws.html

About the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center:

The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC), operated by the Department of Police, Animal Services Division, provides high-standard sheltering and care to the homeless, abused, and neglected animals in our community and ensures the safety and welfare of the county's citizens. We are the County's only open-admission, municipal shelter. Through adoptions, education, outreach, and more, MCASAC serves as a critical community resource to promote and advocate for responsible pet care. Animal Services Officers are on duty seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours a day. For more information, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices.

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