



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Is It Too Hot To Leave Your Pet In The Car?

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA . . . As spring turns into summer and the temperatures soar, the Department's Animal Control Bureau reminds residents to not leave pets unattended in vehicles for even short periods of time.

The number of unattended pets left in cars each spring and summer is unacceptable because pets, like children, are particularly sensitive to heat. In a closed car high temperatures can, *and will*, be fatal to your pets.

Research shows that on an 80-degree day the temperature inside a closed vehicle can reach up to 120 degrees, or higher, in a matter of *minutes*. At such high temperatures animals can become overheated, displaying symptoms such as brain damage, heat stroke and/or suffocation – and death can occur. An animal should not be kept in a car when external temperatures exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

If an animal in a vehicle appears to be suffering, the pet's owner can be fined up to \$2,500 and/or serve up to 12 months of jail time for cruelty to animals under the "deprives any animal of necessary food, drink, shelter, or emergency veterinary treatment" section of the County Code.

The Animal Control Bureau suggests that residents and visitors never leave a pet in a parked vehicle unattended. No errand, even a short one, should cause a pet to suffer from heat exhaustion. Be kind to your pets and leave them at home rather than leave them unattended in a hot vehicle.

If you encounter a pet that appears to be in distress in a parked car, please contact 9-1-1 for immediate assistance.

Prince William County wishes you a safe summer with your pets!

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