

## Humane Officer's Corner

### Hot Dog Calls: by Jill Posanski

Wow, some very hot weather has arrived! It heralds summer fun, a break from school and vacation time. It can also lead to some not-so-carefree situations.

Every summer humane officers respond to reports of animals left in vehicles on very warm days. Humane officers consider these emergencies and take action right away. The typical "hot dog call" is usually reported by shoppers at store parking lots. When folks call these in, we ask the following questions: their store location and location in the parking lot, the vehicle license plate and a description of the dog's distress. We call the store manager immediately and ask them to make a public address announcement regarding the hot pet. We contact the police or sheriff to respond and we head to the location as well. Usually, the vehicle is gone by the time we arrive.

If the car is still in the parking lot and the animal is okay, we wait to talk with the owners and educate them on the potential dangers to their pet. If the animal is truly in distress, we quickly take the temperature inside the car and go through our checklist of distress symptoms. We can request the police open the vehicle. Such entry is legal only if the animal is in imminent danger of death. We leave our card on the windshield, and take the pet to an emergency veterinary hospital. The owner can be cited for cruelty to animals, and is responsible for the veterinary bills. Plus, they get my lecture!

I have never had the same owner get my "hot dog" lecture twice. They seem to learn the lesson. I hope that their actions did not cost their pet its' life. Ironically, I am commonly told by owners that they love the dog so much, they take it everywhere with them. I ask them to please love their pet enough to leave it home on warm days! Feel free to tell your friends that, too! Veterinarians have described to me what physically happens to a dog that is overheating. I will spare you the upsetting details, but suffice to say it is agonizing. If you see a pet in a vehicle on a warm day, here is a checklist to see if you should call for emergency response:

Rapid, frantic, noisy breathing/ Bright red tongue and mucus membranes/ Saliva is thick and ropy

Diarrhea (often bloody)/ Vomiting/ Glazed eyes/ Seizures/ Collapse/ Pale grey lips as problem progresses

Play it safe! Leave your furry friends at home on days with temperatures over 65 degrees!

**FUN IDEA: KEEP YOUR DOG COOL AND BUSY: FREEZE TOYS, TREATS AND KIBBLES IN A BIG ICE BLOCK. SERVE OUTSIDE IN THE SHADE. THAT'S A PUPSCICLE FOR A COOL DOG!**