

Don't forget Fido: Ontario SPCA issues safety warning for pets during long weekend

Written By Sam Odrowski

With the long weekend around the corner, the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society are issuing a safety message to pet owners. The SPCA is urging pet parents to plan ahead before taking a trip to keep their animals safe.

Whether it's a trip to the cottage, a backyard barbecue, or hitting the road, it's important to ensure pets are well taken care of.

"Hot temperatures and busy holiday activities can be overwhelming, or even dangerous, for our furry friends," said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society in a statement on July 30.

"As part of its annual No Hot Pets campaign, the Ontario SPCA is urging everyone to take precautions and visit nohotpets.ca to pledge to keep animals safe in hot weather.

Shannon Bury, community outreach coordinator for the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre, stressed the importance of planning ahead during the heat of summer.

"Long weekends are a time to unwind, but we can't forget about the needs of our animals," said Bury. "With a bit of planning, you can help your furry companions stay safe, cool and comfortable all weekend long."

The Ontario SPCA has five tips to help pets stay safe through the August Long Weekend.

• When travelling, never leave animals unattended in a vehicle, even for a quick stop. Cars can become dangerously hot in minutes, even if they are parked in the shade with the windows down. Plan pet-friendly stops when bringing an animal, or leave them at home where they are safe and comfortable. Pet-friendly businesses can download a sign welcoming pets at nohotpets.ca

• During a camping trip, it's important to remember to keep furry friends leashed at a campsite. Provide constant access to water and shade, and never leave pets alone in a tent, camper, or vehicle.

• Pet owners who are boating need to fit their animal with a lifejacket and ensure they stay hydrated and cool. Watch for signs of overheating, like excessive panting or drooling. If your boat doesn't have a top or cabin where an animal can seek shade, leave them at home.

Backyard barbecues can pose a danger to pets. Remember to keep animals away from the grill and human food, especially foods that are toxic to animals, like onions, grapes, and alcohol. Set up a shady, quiet space for them to retreat from noise and crowds.

During cottage time, ensure furry family members have up-to-date ID tags or a microchip in case they wander off. Keep an eye on them around the water, and provide a cool, shaded area where they can relax.

The Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre is encouraging animal owners to take the No Hot Pets pledge today at nohotpets.ca for a chance to win a YETI summer prize pack. Entrants also get access to hot weather safety resources, a downloadable toolkit, and tips to help spread the message of pet safety.

Anyone who sees an animal in distress needs to take action. Call the government's Provincial Animal Welfare Services at 1-833-9ANIMAL or your local police. In an emergency, call 911.

"Let's make this long weekend safe and enjoyable for everyone - including our furry family members," said the Ontario SPCA and

Humane Society.