



## Safety Message General Public



### Heat Emergencies (Pets):

Warmer temperatures mean more time outside for both two-legged Tygart Valley residents and their four-legged friends; avoid heat emergency not only for yourself but also for your four-legged friends during the summer.

Balancing your pet's length of exercise and intensity can be crucial for your dog's health during the warmer seasons. We often find that our emergency team treats pets with heat-related injuries at the beginning of the summer – when pets and families are adjusting to the warmer days.

Temperatures do not have to be in triple digits to put a dog at risk for heat exhaustion, heat stroke, dehydration, etc. This is because a dog's natural cooling mechanism relies on panting to cool off, an inefficient and slow process.

Any dog could get heat stroke if exercising too long on a hot day. However, there are some breeds or characteristics that could make yours particularly susceptible, including:

- A senior dog or very young pup
- Overweight
- Unaccustomed to physical exercise/out-of-shape
- Suffering from heart or respiratory disease
- Certain breeds of dogs, such as boxers, pugs, Shih Tzu (dogs or cats with short muzzles).

Reminder to pet families always keep your pets in a cool environment with plenty of shade and fresh water. More importantly, avoid extreme exertion during the heat of the day. Dogs overcome with heat following rigorous outdoor activities may have heat stroke—a life-threatening situation.

The first indication of heat exertion is excessive panting or difficulty breathing. Many dogs will become lethargic and can develop salivation, vomiting, and/or diarrhea, this can even progress to stupor, weakness, staggering or a lack of coordination and seizures—all signify a veterinary emergency. If your dog experiences these symptoms, seek veterinary care immediately.

Fast action in this scenario might save your dog's life. Remove him/her from the hot area immediately. Wet the dog thoroughly with cool water (not ice or ice water) and use a fan to cool your pet as you transport him/her to the

***Under no circumstance leave your pet in a vehicle unattended during hot humid temperatures.***

If you are concerned that your pet is behaving acutely abnormally, whether or not you suspect a reaction to an insect bite or sting, it is always appropriate to consult your veterinarian right away.