



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Keep Pet Safety in Mind during Warm Weather**

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## **Keep Pet Safety in Mind during Warm Weather**

Pets provide comfort and companionship, but as the weather warms your vehicle can be unsafe or even deadly for them. Hundreds of pets die around the country each year from being left in vehicles in dangerous temperatures.

The official start of summer is just days away and high temperatures in the Yakima area are already well into the 80s. On an 85-degree day, leaving your pet in a vehicle for just seven minutes exposes them to temperatures reaching 100 degrees. After 30 minutes, the interior of your vehicle reaches 120 degrees.

On a day with temperatures reaching 100 degrees, not uncommon in Yakima during the summer, the interior of a vehicle reaches 140 degrees in just 15 minutes.

As a result, the City of Yakima's Code Enforcement Office offers the following reminders:

- Time is critical. It takes just minutes for the interior of a vehicle to heat up to dangerous levels, which can result in brain damage or death for the animal.
- Windows cracked open don't make a difference. Studies have shown that even when vehicle windows are left open the temperature in a vehicle can reach dangerous levels.
- Dogs and cats don't sweat to release heat, they pant. Panting increases muscle movement which increases body heat even more. If trapped in a confined, hot area, the animal cannot cool down.
- If a pet is overheated, the goal is to cool down the animal's core body temperature gradually. The animal needs to be drenched in water but not in ice or cold water, which may make the animal go into shock.

What should you do if you see an animal in heat distress?

1. Record what you observe. Write down the make, model and license plate number of the vehicle and street location.
2. Try to locate the owner. If no owner is found, call 911 immediately and wait by the vehicle.

Those who leave their pets in a vehicle in dangerous temperatures are subject to a \$500 fine per pet. Yakima Municipal Code (YMC) 6.30.190 states, "It is unlawful for any person to leave any animal confined within or on a motor vehicle at any location under such conditions as may endanger the health or well-being of the animal, including without limitation conditions involving dangerous temperature, lack of food, water or attention."

Visit <https://www.yakimawa.gov/services/animal-control/> for more about animal control services in the City of Yakima. The Animal Control Complaint Hotline is 575-6038.