SUMMERTIME

Care and Safety Tips for Your Dog

Summertime can be fun for both you and your dog. But pet owners need to take some precautions to keep their canine companions happy, cool and safe during the dog days of summer. Bark Busters has created the following tips to keep in mind for this summer:

Beat the Heat

Remember that a parked car can become dangerously hot in only a few minutes. Dogs are not efficient at cooling themselves. They cannot perspire and can only dispel heat by panting and through the pads of their feet. Panting and drinking water helps to cool them, but if they have only overheated air to breathe in a parked car, dogs can suffer brain and organ damage after just 15 minutes.

Your light-colored dog's coat can invite damage from the sun's ultraviolet rays, leading to sunburn and possible skin cancer. If your dog is light-colored and/or he lacks black pigment around the eyes, ears and nose, keep him out of the bright sun. Ask your veterinarian about sun block for your dog, preferably in a formula he can't lick off. Be aware, too, that hot pavement can burn your dog's paws. If the ground feels warm or hot to your hand, don't walk there.

Dogs should always have access to cool shade and fresh water in the summer heat.

Rules of the Road

An unrestrained dog in a vehicle is dangerous to everyone in the car, including the dog himself. Secure your dog in the backseat with a safety harness or in a pet carrier fastened to a seatbelt. Another option is to install a pet barrier to keep the dog in the back area of your vehicle. Dogs riding in the front can be seriously hurt if the airbags deploy.

If you must transport your dog in the bed of a pickup, be sure he is restrained, preferably in a crate or carrier secured to the truck.

Avoid allowing your dog to hang his head out the car window—he could suffer eye injury from flying debris.

When stopping the car along the way, attach a leash to the dog's collar before opening the door so he can't escape. Use a leash to walk your dog.

Waterproof Your Dog

Many dogs enjoy swimming, no matter how clean or dirty the water. If your dog has had a dip in a lake or river, rinse him off to avoid ear mites, eye infections and pesky clingy insects, which can imbed themselves into his fur.

If your dog loves to jump into your swimming pool, make sure he knows how to get out safely. When a dog falls into a lake or river, his instinct tells him to turn around and get out from the point at which he fell in. However, in a suburban swimming pool, a dog may drown if he follows this instinctive action. Therefore, teach your dog where and how to get out of the pool regardless of where he went in.

Not all dogs like or know how to swim. If your dog appears eager to give swimming a try, let him get used to it gradually. Refrain from throwing a nervous, inexperienced swimmer into the water.

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Fear of Thunderstorms

Fear of thunderstorms is common in dogs. Many dogs can sense a storm coming from the rapidly falling barometric pressure. Thus, your dog may show anxiety even before the storm can be heard.

Dogs can sense fear or discomfort from people, so it is important you develop a calm attitude toward storms. Let your dog stay close, and try to distract him with play. Do not try to comfort him in a sympathetic voice; this will sound like praise and may increase his nervousness and confusion.

Keep windows and curtains closed to reduce noise and bright flashes. Turn on a TV or radio at normal volume to distract your dog from loud noises and help him to relax.

Provide your dog with a safe place to be during storms, whether inside or out. Create a special den-like area in your home where your dog always feels safe and secure. If a storm is brewing, lead your dog to his special place to help him feel calm and protected. If you cannot bring your dog inside, cover his doghouse with a blanket to offer some protection from the bursts of lightning and thunder.

Dogs that continue to panic when a storm approaches may have to be reconditioned by creating an artificial storm with environmental recordings. While reconditioning can be a time-consuming procedure, it can have a high success rate. A qualified dog behavioral therapist, such as a Bark Busters trainer, can help your dog be calmer during thunderstorms. In some cases, medication may be the best solution to help your dog cope with his fear of storms. Consult with your veterinarian about possible treatments, in conjunction with training.

By taking these precautions, you and your dog can enjoy a healthier, fun-filled summertime!

This information is brought to you as a public service by Bark Busters Home Dog Training—the world's largest, most trusted dog training company. Bark Busters is the only international dog training company that offers guaranteed lifetime support. Find more information by contacting your local dog behavioral therapist at 1-877-500-BARK(2275) or by visiting www.BarkBusters.com.

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