



# CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT

## PRESS RELEASE

530-897-4900

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**May 19, 2017**  
**For Immediate Release**

### **Pets in Vehicles**

As the weather warms up this week, the City of Chico Animal Services would like to remind pet owners to check the weather before bringing their pet along for the ride. Leaving your pet in a vehicle, even on a moderately warm day, can become life threatening in a very short time.

To get an idea of how hot a car can get, a study done at Stanford University showed that on a day when the outside temperature is 72 degrees, the inside of a car can reach 117 degrees within 60 minutes, *with the majority of the temperature rise occurring within the first 15 to 30 minutes*. On average, a car's internal temperature will rise 19 degrees during the first 10 minutes, 34 degrees within the first 30 minutes and 43 degrees within the first 60 minutes, maxing out at a rise of 45-50 degrees in the first 1-2 hours.

Leaving the windows cracked, even as much as 8 inches has little effect on the heating process and does not decrease the maximum temperature attained. A car that is air conditioned will reach outside temperatures within 5 minutes of the air conditioning being turned off, and will begin to heat up at a similar rate as a non-air-conditioned car.

Dogs and cats only have sweat glands on their nose and their feet, and rely on panting to cool off. Panting only works if the air is considerably cooler than the animal's body temperature. If they only have hot air to breathe, their body temperature begins to rise, and an animal can suffer irreversible brain and organ damage after only 15 minutes. Older animals, very young animals, short-nosed breeds, and animals that are obese or have respiratory or cardiovascular problems are especially susceptible.

Signs of heat stress include heavy panting, glazed eyes, trouble walking, drooling, thick saliva and a deep red or purple tongue. The animal may start to vomit and have diarrhea. As the animal's body temperature continues to rise, it will progress to heat stroke and the animal will collapse, become unconscious, and start to have seizures. If left untreated, this will lead to death. If caught early enough, they can recover, but may have permanent organ damage.

**Supervisor:**

**Watch Commander:**

**Prepared By: Tracy Mohr, Animal Services  
Manager, 894-5630**

**Date/Time: May 19, 2017**

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Dogs in the back of a pickup truck or camper shell are also susceptible to heat stress or heat stroke, as well as burns to the pads of their feet. In California, it is a misdemeanor to leave an animal in an unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger their health or well-being, and the owner can face both fines and jail time.

If you see an animal in a vehicle, make a note of the make and model of the vehicle, license plate number, and location of the vehicle. If the animal does not seem to be in distress, try to find the owner by going into surrounding businesses to have the owner paged. If the animal appears to be in distress and is showing signs of heat stress or heat stroke, it is an emergency and you should call Animal Control or the Police Department. Give them the vehicle information and wait by the car if possible to direct the officer. If you can, offer the animal water through an open window while waiting.

Keep your pets safe this summer by leaving your pets at home. Never leave them unattended in a vehicle, even for a few minutes. For more information, contact Chico Animal Control at 897-4960.

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