

# AVOID DOG DAZE EXCESSIVE HEAT COULD HURT POOCH:[Final Edition]

REGINA CLARK *Daily Press*. **Daily Press**. Newport News: Jul 27, 1999. pg. B.1

**Full Text** (637 words)

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Marnet Ware of Brandon Heights keeps a watchful eye on 4-year-old "Britches." The English bulldog likes to sit in the backyard of her Stratford Road home. But his fondness for the outdoors, even when temperatures sizzle, has landed him at times in an animal hospital.

So Ware keeps him inside during the hottest parts of the day, providing him with cool water and a fan. Those are steps that animal groups and veterinarians say will help animals avoid heat stress.

Temperatures plus humidity equal misery for pets as well as people. And some animals are more affected than others. Dogs, because they are more active, are more likely to suffer heat distress than cats. Large, older, obese and very young dogs seem to be more vulnerable to the area's hot, moist air. Particular breeds such as Labrador retrievers, Golden retrievers, Rottweilers and English bulldogs have more difficulty with heat than smaller dogs.

"The problems we're seeing now are with old dogs that are obese," said Allen Meyer, a veterinarian with Animal Medical Center of the Peninsula. "Yesterday we had a dog come in with severe respiratory distress. It had to be given oxygen."

Meyer said the 12-year-old dog had been taken for a walk when temperatures were high.

While people sweat to cool down from the heat, dogs cool when air passes over their tongues. If a dog has circulatory problems, that process is more difficult, Meyer said.

The hot weather also brings distress calls to the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"I get people calling and complaining about dogs tied in the sun with no water and people who go in the shopping center and leave dogs in cars," said Gene Falls, SPCA director.

Two weeks ago, Falls responded to a call about a dog that had been left in a car while the owners shopped at a mall. Because of the heat, the dog died within 20 minutes.

"People don't stop and think that when temperatures are in the 80s and 90s, it's much hotter in the car," said Capt. Emile Louis Augustine of Top Guard Security, which monitors Patrick Henry Mall.

The mall security officers often call the SPCA when animals are left in cars, but that's after paging the owners several times. Last week, the owners of a poodle notified security that their dog was missing from their car. But mall security knew exactly where the animal was. When the owners didn't respond for three hours after security had paged them, the dog was removed from the car and taken to the animal shelter.

The heat and humidity are expected to continue over the next several days, according to Diane Shade of the National Weather Service in Wakefield.

Meyer said a good rule for pet owners is to keep animals inside during sweltering conditions.

"Keep them in during the day," he said, "and take them out for a short walk at night."

## KEEPING ROVER COOL

\* Provide dogs that stay outside during the day with a five-gallon bucket of water. Anchor the bucket by placing a rock

in the bottom to prevent the dog from knocking it over.

- \* Place outside dogs in a kennel or pen with adequate ventilation such as open fencing
- \* Place dogs in a shady area
- \* Avoid exercising dogs during the day
- \* If a dog is kept in a garage, use a fan to circulate the air

#### SIGNS OF HEAT DISTRESS

- \* Profuse panting
- \* Salivates heavily
- \* Stares and fails to respond to commands
- \* Rapid heart beat
- \* Fatigue
- \* Collapse

Source: Pattie Seeger, Pembroke Animal Hospital office manager

#### **[Illustration]**

Staff photo (color) by BRIAN TOTIN; Caption: Rx for K9s Britches, the 4-year-old English bulldog of Marnet Wae of Brandon Heights, lies on a central air grate to keep cool.

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