Calvert County NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 13, 2017
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Keep Pets Safe During Sweltering Temperatures

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – July 13, 2017 – The National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory for today with temperatures in the mid to upper 90s and a heat index value of around 105 degrees. The Calvert County Department of Public Safety Division of Animal Control reminds citizens to take steps to keep their pets safe when temperatures are soaring.

"Our pets respond differently to heat than people do," said Department of Public Safety Director Jackie Vaughan. "It is important we take steps to protect them the same way we would for small child or the elderly."

Pet owners should provide ample shade and water for their pets. Any time a pet is outside, make sure it has protection from heat and sun and plenty of fresh, cold water. In heat waves, add ice to water when possible. Pet owners can also follow these additional tips provided by the Humane Society of the United States:

- Provide pets tree shade or shade with tarps because they don't obstruct air flow. A doghouse does not provide relief from heat; in fact, it makes it worse.

- Never leave your pets in a parked car – not even for a minute, even with the car and air conditioning running. On a warm day, temperatures inside a vehicle can rise rapidly to dangerous levels. On an 85-degree day, for example, the temperature inside a car with the windows opened slightly can reach 102 degrees within 10 minutes. After 30 minutes, the temperature will reach 120 degrees.

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- Watch the humidity. Animals pant to evaporate moisture from their lungs, which takes heat away from their body. If the humidity is too high, they are unable to cool themselves and their temperature can skyrocket to dangerous levels.

- Limit exercise on hot days. Adjust intensity and duration of exercise in accordance with the temperature. On very hot days, limit exercise to early morning or evening hours. Be especially careful with pets with white-colored ears, who are more susceptible to skin cancer, and short-nosed pets, who typically have difficulty breathing.

- Avoid walking dogs on asphalt and concrete. The surfaces get very hot and can burn your pet's paws. Walk your dog on the grass if possible, as being close to the ground can heat their body quickly. Always carry water with you to keep your dog from dehydrating and keep walks to a minimum.

- Giving your dog a lightweight summer haircut can help prevent overheating, but never shave to the skin. Dogs need one inch of protection to avoid getting sunburned.

- Do not rely on a fan. Pets respond differently to heat than humans do. (Dogs, for instance, sweat primarily through their feet.) Fans do not cool off pets as effectively as they do people.

- Cool your pet inside. Keep your pet from overheating indoors or out with a cooling body wrap, vest or mat. Soak these products in cool water and they'll stay cool (but usually dry) for up to three days. A cool soaking bath is also a good idea for dogs that don't find baths stressful.

- Provide access to fresh water, whether your pets are inside or out with you.

To learn more about emergency preparedness for pets, contact the Calvert County Department of Public Safety, Division of Animal Control, at 410-535-1600, ext. 2526. For information on Calvert County Government, visit www.co.cal.md.us or like us on Facebook.

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Calvert County is Maryland's smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to more than 91,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, energy, advanced manufacturing and administrative services. (LL)