

Press Release

Dogs in Vehicles

It's nice that the temperatures have finally warmed up, and while we enjoy more time outdoors, we want to share this "spring fever" with our pets. But taking Fido along for the ride could be dangerous to his health, perhaps even deadly.

We all know it's bad to leave a dog in a car on a hot day. But what does "hot" mean? A Stanford University study found that on a 71.6 degree sunny day, the temperature inside a navy blue car rose to 116.6 degrees within 60 minutes. And that's with the windows open a bit. An increase of 45 degrees, in just one hour.

You say you'd never leave your dog in a hot car for an hour? That may be true, but how long are you willing to take a chance? A study by the Department of Geosciences at San Francisco University showed that after just 10 minutes on an 80 degree day, the temperature inside a car, windows partially open, was 99 degrees. After 20 minutes, it was 109 degrees.

There are many factors at play. Just like people, very old and very young dogs are more at risk. Dark fur and being overweight puts dogs more at risk as well. Even the color of your car's upholstery plays a part.

If you see a dog in a parked vehicle, and it looks seriously distressed, first try to find the owner. Check local shops and restaurants to let them know you believe their dog is in danger. If needed, you can call the Brattleboro Police Department at 257-7950. Give the location of the vehicle, plus the make, model and color. The animal control officer or a police officer will be there as soon as possible. Try not to take matters into your own hands. It's usually best to leave the job to people with the proper tools to safely open a vehicle.

In Vermont, the law says you can't leave an animal unattended in a standing or parked motor vehicle in a manner that would endanger the health or safety of the animal. To do so is considered "Cruelty to Animals", which is punishable by a \$500 ticket, or in extreme cases, possibly a year in prison and/or a \$1,000 fine.

But the law shouldn't be what stops you from putting your dog in the car. Do it because you love them enough that you don't want them to die there.