

The Post and Courier

Your pets could die in a hot car

Letters to the Editor

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Summer is in full swing in the Lowcountry. June averaged 5 1/2 degrees hotter than normal. It is absolutely essential no one leaves a pet unattended in a car.

You say you'll "only be gone 10 minutes." When the temperature is just 80 degrees, the inside of your car will reach 99 degrees in only 10 minutes and 109 degrees in 20 minutes. As a general guideline consider these numbers from a study at Stanford University:

On an 80 degree day the average inside temp of your car:

--In 10 minutes rises 19 degrees

--In 20 minutes rises 29 degrees

--In 30 minutes rises 34 degrees

--In 60 minutes rises 43 degrees

--In one to two hours rises 40 to 50 degrees

In direct sunlight the temperature rises even faster. As the outside temperature increases the inside of your car will heat up even more quickly. Your pet can die in just 10 to 15 minutes.

With its windows your car acts as a greenhouse by trapping the sun's energy inside. It is a very effective system. We all have opened our car on a summer day to be amazed at just how hot it is inside.

Remember, the sun moves across the sky. The car you left in the shade may be in the sun in just a few minutes.

You say you'll "just crack the windows" to get circulation. Forget it. Studies have proven this does not help at all. Humans cool themselves by sweating from each and every skin pore. But pets only cool themselves by sweating from their paws and panting. They are not built to efficiently cool.

They need to breathe cool air to cool themselves but if they are in your hot car breathing the superheated air how can they cool off? The more hot air they breathe the harder they work trying to cool off only making themselves hotter, more stressed and panicked. The vicious

cycle of heatstroke begins. All organ systems will be damaged: lungs, kidneys, liver, heart, brain, intestinal tract and blood cells.

This tragedy happens almost daily in Charleston. Do not think you can outsmart Mother Nature. You can't, and your pet is left to pay the ultimate price.

Charleston County and city fines range to over \$1,000 for leaving an animal in a hot car. Fines can be higher if something tragically happens to them.

Also note that Folly Beach does not allow dogs on the beach from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 1 through September. Prior to those times, on a leash only.

If you see an animal closed up in a car, call the police.

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