

Press release

Minister McConalogue reminds dog owners of the hazards of summer weather

From [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/).

Published on 13 June 2023

Last updated on 14 June 2023

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue has issued a reminder in relation to the safety of pets during hot weather:

“Many households enjoy the company of a family pet.

“It’s fantastic to see the sun shining and everyone out enjoying themselves. At the same time, it is important to protect our pets during hot weather, especially flat-faced (brachycephalic) breeds which have difficulties breathing. A number of simple steps will help to keep our pets safe.”

These steps include:

- do not leave your dog unattended in a car. Even when a car is parked in the shade or with windows left open, internal vehicle temperature may rise rapidly, causing heat stroke which can cause death
- dogs must have a shaded area to rest, out of direct sunlight
- fresh water should be readily available to dogs both indoors and outdoors

- the best time to exercise your dog in hot weather is first thing in the morning or evening time, when temperatures are cooler. On longer walks, remember to bring water for your dog (collapsible bowls are useful and easily fit into a carry bag)
- tarmac and pavements in direct sunlight may become very hot and burn your dog's paws. On a hot day, it is better to walk your dog on grass or in shaded areas
- grooming or clipping your dog helps your dog to regulate their body temperature during hot weather. This is especially important if your dog has a long or thick coat of hair
- as dogs may get sunburn, especially if they have pink skin, please limit exposure of your dog to direct sunlight and ask your vet about suitable sunscreen for dogs. Sunscreen suitable for dogs may be applied to areas with less hair such as ear tips and nose bridges
- if your dog becomes too hot, this may lead to heat stroke, which can cause death. Familiarise yourself with the signs of heat stroke in dogs. These signs include heavy panting, drooling, lethargy, confusion, vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness or seizures. In hot weather, if you suspect your dog has heat stroke, please contact a vet immediately. You could also try to cool your dog down by moving your dog indoors if they are outside in direct sunlight, wetting their body, ears and paws with cool (not very cold) water and offering small volumes of cool or lukewarm (not cold) water to drink
- if you have a flat-faced breed (known as brachycephalic), such as a pug, boxer, English bulldog or French bulldog, the above steps are critical. Flat-faced (brachycephalic) dogs overheat more quickly than other dogs and are more susceptible to heat stroke. These breeds have narrowed air passages which makes breathing more difficult for them, and this prevents them being able to cool themselves down as effectively as other breeds by panting
- some flat-faced (brachycephalic) dogs suffer from a condition called brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS), where their abnormally narrow airways makes breathing much more difficult, particularly when exercising or in hot conditions. Dogs which suffer from BOAS require special care and attention in hot weather and rapid veterinary attention if they show signs of heat stroke

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