Extreme heat situations can be hazardous to your pets. Animals can overheat, suffer dehydration, and even die in hot weather. Heat-related illnesses can be prevented if proper measures are taken.

Before Excessive Heat Situations

- Establish cool housing areas.
  □ Establish areas indoors or outdoors for extreme heat situations – cool basement, shade from a tree, doghouse or other shelter to protect from the heat.

During Excessive Heat Situations

- Keep pets cool.
  □ Keep pets indoors as much as possible.
  □ Use a hose or let your pet swim in a kiddie pool, lake or stream to cool off.
- Cool water.
  □ Make sure your pet has access to cool, clean water.
  □ Check the water bowl frequently throughout the day as pets will drink more during high temperatures.
- Limit or restrict exercise.
  □ Exercise of any kind should be cut back and limited to the cooler, early morning or later evening hours.
  □ Avoid midday heat.
- Limit sun exposure.
  □ Dogs and cats can get sunburned just like people, especially their ears and noses.
- Avoid burned pads on your pet’s feet.
  □ Avoid walking your dog on hot surfaces, such as pavement, asphalt, or metal.
  □ Walk your pet in the grass.
  □ Signs of burned pads: limping or refusing to walk ● licking or chewing at the feet ● pads are darker in color ● part of the pad is missing
  □ If you notice a problem, flush the pad and foot with cool water or a cool compress; get the pet to a grassy area, or if possible carry him.
  □ Contact your veterinarian to examine your pet for signs of deeper burns, blisters and possibly infection.
- Never leave pets in a parked car.
  □ Each year pets die from extreme heat after being left in parked vehicles.
  □ Cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly – even within minutes.

- Monitor your pet for signs of heat-related illness.
  □ Watch your pet for signs of tiring and too much panting.
  □ Brachycephalic breeds (i.e., short-nosed breeds, such as bulldogs and pugs), large heavy-coated breeds, and those dogs with heart or respiratory problems are more at risk for heat stroke.

Heat-Related Illnesses

- If you see any of these signs, get veterinary attention immediately!
- Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation!
  □ Occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature and cool itself.
  □ Signs: extremely high body temperature (above 104-110°F) ● excessive panting ● dark or bright red tongue and gums ● sticky or dry tongue and gums ● staggering, stupor, seizures ● bloody diarrhea or vomiting ● nausea ● unconsciousness
  □ Pets can go into a coma or die from heat stroke.
- Heat stress.
  □ A milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.
  □ Signs: heavy panting ● glazed eyes ● rapid pulse ● unsteadiness or staggering ● vomiting ● weakness
- Sunburn.
  □ Animals with pink skin are at great risk of sunburn.

Actions to take:

□ Contact your veterinarian immediately!
□ Move pet to a shaded/air conditioned area.
□ Apply ice packs or cold towels to your pet’s head, neck, and chest.
□ Do not cool your pet too quickly.
□ Let your pet drink small amounts of cool water or lick ice cubes, but do not force ice or water to your pet.

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