

Calgary Humane Society

Transportation of Companion Animals

Position:

The Calgary Humane Society believes all companion animals should be transported in safe and humane ways.

Calgary Humane Society opposes the transportation of companion animals across great distances for the purposes of sales and believes that responsible pet owners will source their animals locally in order to avoid travel that can cause animals' distress, harm, or even death.

Given the stresses travel can place on pets, responsible pet owners should consider leaving their pets at home. If this is not possible, animals should be transported in one of two ways: 1) Confined to a comfortable, well-ventilated crate that is secured to the vehicle; or, 2) Restricted from movement within the vehicle by an animal seat belt (available at many pet stores).

Rationale:

- There are many risks to an animal's health and safety if transported without proper confinement or restriction from movement within the vehicle. These include:
 - Falling out of or being thrown from the vehicle during sudden stops.
 - Jumping from the vehicle into traffic.
 - Suffering injuries from wind, insects and flying debris.
 - Strangulation or being dragged behind the vehicle if the animal is tethered in an open vehicle and falls or jumps out of it.
- Animals that are able to move around within a moving vehicle may distract the driver, which could result in an accident.
- In the City of Calgary and many other municipalities, transporting animals in the back of a pick-up truck is a violation of community bylaws.
- Transporting of animals in the cargo hold of airplanes can be both highly stressful for pets and dangerous.

- Animals left in unattended vehicles may easily be taunted, stolen, or harmed by extreme environmental conditions.
- Additional dangers/suggestions in warm weather:
 - On a warm day, a vehicle acts like an oven, trapping the heat inside. The inside temperature can soar to 39° C (100° F) in as little as ten minutes, and to 49° C (120° F) within thirty minutes. This can happen even if the windows are slightly rolled down or if the vehicle is parked in the shade.
 - Animals do not sweat in the same way as humans. With nothing but overheated air to breathe, a dog can quickly fall victim to severe discomfort, brain damage, or even death.
 - If it is necessary to travel with an animal, travel with a passenger so you do not need to leave your pet in the car with the windows rolled up.
 - Signs of heat exhaustion include heavy panting, unsteadiness, vomiting, glazed eyes, or a tongue that has changed in color to deep red or purple. If a pet is suffering from heat exhaustion, the owner should apply cool (not cold) water to its entire body, not including its head. The owner can also offer cool water to drink or ice cubes to lick, in addition to applying ice packs or cold towels to its head, neck, and chest. The owner should take his/her pet to the nearest veterinarian as soon as possible.
- Additional dangers in cold weather:
 - A vehicle can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold. The companion animal can freeze to death.
 - If the car is left running, a pet could die from breathing in carbon monoxide.