

Free Summer Dog Safety Checklist

A quick printable checklist for hot pavement, car safety, water breaks, indoor cooling, and heat stroke warning signs.

Use this checklist before walks, car rides, outdoor time, and hot days at home. This printable is for general education only and is not a replacement for veterinary care. If your dog seems seriously unwell or shows signs of heat stroke, call your veterinarian or emergency vet right away.

Daily Summer Safety Check

- ☐ Check the temperature before walks or outdoor play.
- ☐ Check humidity if the air feels heavy or sticky.
- ☐ Do the 5-second pavement test before every walk.
- ☐ Walk before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. when possible.
- ☐ Keep walks shorter during hot weather.
- ☐ Bring fresh water from home.
- ☐ Bring your own clean travel bowl.
- ☐ Avoid communal water bowls when possible.
- ☐ Watch your dog's breathing, energy, and behavior.
- ☐ Refresh indoor water bowls throughout the day.
- ☐ Make sure your dog has a cool place to rest.

The 5-Second Pavement Test

Place the back of your hand flat on the pavement for 5 to 7 seconds.

- ☐ If you can hold it there comfortably, it may be safe enough for a short walk.
- ☐ If it feels too hot for your hand, it is too hot for your dog's paws.
- ☐ Choose grass, shade, or wait until the ground cools.
- ☐ Check sidewalks, asphalt, driveways, patios, and parking lots.

Watch for paw burn signs:

- ☐ Limping
- ☐ Lifting paws while walking
- ☐ Refusing to walk
- ☐ Licking or chewing paws
- ☐ Red, blistered, darkened, or irritated paw pads

Hot Car Safety

- ☐ Never leave your dog in a parked car on a warm day.
- ☐ Do not rely on cracked windows.
- ☐ Do not leave your dog in the car "just for a minute."
- ☐ If your dog cannot go inside with you, leave your dog safely at home.
- ☐ Plan pet-friendly stops before leaving the house

Dogs That Need Extra Heat Protection

- ☐ Check if your dog is higher risk:
- ☐ Flat-faced breed
- ☐ Senior dog
- ☐ Puppy
- ☐ Overweight dog
- ☐ Thick-coated dog
- ☐ Heart condition
- ☐ Breathing or lung condition
- ☐ Recovering from illness or surgery

Flat-faced breeds can include Bulldogs, French Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers, Shih Tzus, Boxers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Pekingese, and other short-nosed dogs.

If your dog is higher risk:

Keeping Your Dog Cool Indoors

- ☐ Close blinds or curtains on sunny windows.
- ☐ Use fans safely.
- ☐ Move your dog to the lowest or coolest floor.
- ☐ Offer a cooling mat or damp towel.
- ☐ Keep fresh water available.
- ☐ Watch for heavy panting while resting.
- ☐ Have a backup cooling plan for extreme heat days.

Backup cooling location: _____

Emergency vet phone number: _____

Regular vet phone number: _____

Heat Stroke Warning Signs

Early warning signs: act right away

- ☐ Heavy or intense panting
- ☐ Panting that does not slow down
- ☐ Drooling more than usual
- ☐ Restlessness or pacing
- ☐ Seeking cool surfaces
- ☐ Acting uncomfortable or unable to settle

Emergency signs: call your vet or emergency vet

- ☐ Glazed or unfocused eyes
- ☐ Vomiting or diarrhea
- ☐ Bright red, pale, or bluish gums
- ☐ Weakness or stumbling
- ☐ Fast heart rate
- ☐ Collapse
- ☐ Seizures
- ☐ Loss of consciousness

What to Do If Your Dog May Be Overheating

- ☐ Move your dog to shade or air conditioning immediately.
- ☐ Call your vet or emergency vet.
- ☐ Apply cool water, not ice water, to paw pads, armpits, groin, neck, and belly.
- ☐ Do not force water if your dog is not alert.
- ☐ Do not use ice packs directly on the skin.
- ☐ Keep your dog calm and cool while getting help.
- ☐ Call ahead so the vet team can prepare.

Simple Summer Routine

- ☐ Test pavement before every walk.
- ☐ Walk early or late.
- ☐ Bring water and your own bowl.
- ☐ Keep indoor spaces cool.
- ☐ Know your dog's normal breathing and behavior.
- ☐ Trust your gut if something feels wrong.

Final Reminder

If it feels hot to you, it may feel much hotter to your dog. Shorter walks, shaded paths, fresh water, and quick action can help prevent a summer emergency.
Small routines can prevent big emergencies.