



Leave Fido at home, not in your vehicle

The recent heat wave has led to an increase in calls from the public who see animals, usually dogs, left unattended in parked vehicles. Often the passer by hears the dog barking and then sees the dog jumping up and down. This is not a sign of distress but often RCMP officers are called and must attend.

“We understand the urgency of these situations and appreciate how the public must feel when they see an animal in a parked vehicle. We also recognize the overwhelming majority of these calls are resolved successfully without any injury to the animal or damage to the car” said Constable Gary O’Brien of the Nanaimo RCMP.

Animal Control and the SPCA have no authority to remove an animal from a vehicle and will contact the RCMP, if it is necessary to do so. If you see an animal in a vehicle, please follow this check list before contacting the RCMP, Animal Control or SPCA.

- Is the vehicle parked in the direct sun (feel the hood) or is there some shade?
- Are the windows down and does the animal have air flow?
- How long have you observed the animal for?
- How is animal acting?
- Is there water?
- Have you tried to contact the owner by going to nearby stores, paging the owner by vehicle description and plate number, inquiring with pedestrians?
- What is the dog doing- panting, laying down, barking, vomiting

“If you observe an animal shaking uncontrollably, it appears to be lethargic or it has lost coordination, it may be in distress. This is a critical situation which may require the attendance of the RCMP”, said Constable Gary O’Brien of the Nanaimo RCMP. The RCMP is the only agency who can lawfully remove an animal from a vehicle and if necessary, break a window or have a tow company attend to unlock the doors.

If you have any questions about animal care or the signs of heat distress in animals, the local Animal Control can be reached at 250-754-1397. Lastly, to avoid these situations, it is strongly suggested during the hot days of summer, all animals should be left at home and not in vehicles.