

Don't leave pets in hot vehicles

It should not come as a shock to anyone that it only takes a few minutes for a pet to suffocate in a car on a hot summer day. Yet, every summer, we hear reports of dogs left unattended in vehicles.

"I was only gone for a few minutes" is a common refrain by pet owners, who are caught leaving their canine companions in the car while they run an errand. This excuse doesn't mean much when, upon returning to their vehicle, they find their dog in medical distress—or worse.

Annually, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) branches across the nation receive hundreds of reports of pets left in cars. Those don't include the number of calls made by concerned animal lovers to local law enforcement agencies, whose officers respond to help rescue Fido from the scorching heat.

According to the Ontario SPCA, parked cars can reach deadly temperatures, even on mild days with the car sheltered in the shade with the windows slightly open. If the temperature outside is roughly 26 degrees Celsius, you can expect the mercury to climb as high as 49 degrees Celsius inside your vehicle. And if the temperature outside is 32 degrees Celsius, the temperature inside a car can spike to 71 degrees Celsius.

Although we treat our pets like family, we have to remember that they aren't one of us. A dog's ability to sweat is extremely limited. It can only withstand a body temperature of 41 degrees Celsius—two degrees higher than normal—for a very brief period before irreversible damage or death can occur.

Pooches suffering from heatstroke may have an increased heart rate, pant or drool excessively, be listless, appear confused and disoriented and have bright red gums. They may also collapse or suffer a seizure. Other signs of heatstroke include vomiting and diarrhea.

In an attempt to further raise awareness of these signs and the dangers associated with leaving pets unattended in cars this season, the Ontario SPCA is turning up the heat on its campaign, No Hot Pets.

The animal welfare agency deserves a high level of praise for its efforts to raise awareness of the potentially fatal dangers of leaving pets in cars and doing its best to protect those who can't speak for themselves—our furry, four-legged friends. As caring community residents, we need to take action.

If you see an animal left unattended in a vehicle, don't simply walk by. Pick up the phone and call Halton Regional Police Service. In doing so, you could be helping save a life.

As for dog owners, enough with the excuses already. Just leave Fido at home.

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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301

Publisher: Dana Robbins

General manager: Steve Foreman

(sforeman@theifp.ca, 905-234-1011)

Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@theifp.ca, 905-234-1012)

Managing editor: Chris Vernon

(cvernon@metroland.com, 905-234-1020)

Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler

(ngeissler@theifp.ca, 905-234-1019)

Classifieds/Real Estate

Kristie Pells

(realestate@theifp.ca, 905-234-1016)

Advertising Sales

Jenny Hawkins

(jhawkins@theifp.ca, 905-234-1014)

Jennifer Spencer

(jspencer@theifp.ca, 905-234-1013)

Rachael Scutt

(rscutt@theifp.ca, 905-234-1015)

Kelli Kosonic

(kkosonic@theifp.ca, 905-234-1018)

Classified Call Centre

1-800-263-6480, Fax 1-866-299-1499

classifieds@metroland.com

Accounting

1-866-773-6575

Editorial

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@theifp.ca, 905-234-1021)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/photographer

(emaher@theifp.ca, 905-234-1023)

Composing

Shelli Harrison (sharrison@theifp.ca 905-234-1017)

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Letters to the editor

Hydro rates continue to climb

Any one keeping track of the weekly electricity "Supply" versus "Demand" statistics in the *Toronto Star* will have noticed that during the last week, the supply greatly surpassed the demand. That is usually the case.

On Monday, July 28, a very hot, high demand day, the peak demand was 21920 MW. Supply totalled almost 27000 MW. Some of the surplus was created by the privately run wind and solar farm suppliers.

Some bright sparks in the various governments signed contracts with these firms for several times higher guaranteed rates than say charged by natural gas plants.

Much of the surplus generated is exported to the U.S. Funny thing about that is, we have to pay them for taking it from us. Many people probably don't know this.

They also don't know that when they once a year fall for that "Earth Hour" scheme, they also help creating surpluses. No problem to our government folk, they just send it to the U.S., and what ever they charge them for taking it, they will hide in your bill, under "Global Adjustment".

It is anticipated that our hydro bills will increase by 46% over the next five years. On top of all that, the 10% "Ontario Clean Energy" rebate that was put in as a vote-getter during the last provincial election, will also be cancelled.

We have gone through several hydro outages the last few days. According to the various "Hydro" explanations, this was caused by equipment unable to cope with the extra demand.

Insiders tell me that it is more a case of equipment that should have been replaced or upgraded decades ago.

Thanks to the idiotic contracts signed with the Green Power suppliers money for that is not available. Same story with collapsing water and drainage pipes in Toronto.

Funny how they found money for Pan Am Games, but not for much needed upkeep of other not-Games-related infrastructures.

With higher Ontario Hydro rates, we can be sure that more of the few manufacturing companies we have left in the province will leave the province.

They used to say: "Will the last person to leave, please switch off the lights." If the hydro outages of the last week are any indication of things to come, the factory lights will go off by themselves.

Marinus Pater, Georgetown

Fire danger in Hungry Hollow

This week we came home to smoke in the ravine. When I ran down to investigate I found a fire that was starting in the brush at the edge of the pathway. It was catching fast and was too far to get a hose to.

I ran back to my house to call the fire department and saw a team of young men who were working on a house two doors down, from Halton Hills Windows. I yelled to them asking if they had a fire extinguisher in their truck. They went into immediate action grabbing buckets and running into the ravine. By the time the fire department got there the fire was largely out.

Thank you to the Halton Hills Windows team, our new neighbour and the Halton Hills Fire Department. The ravine is a beautiful asset to this town and it would have been devastating to lose any of it.

I also ask that people be careful when in the ravine during these dry months.

Thank you,
Meg Mancuso