



pennsylvania
STATE POLICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Reminder for Summer: Leaving Unattended Pets in Hot Vehicles is Illegal

Indiana, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) remind the public that it is illegal for pet owners to leave their dog or cat in hot vehicles.

Last fall, Governor Tom Wolf signed House Bill 1216, [the Hot Car Bill](#), a law that gives police officers and first responders the authority to enter a vehicle and retrieve a cat or dog that is in immediate distress. This new law raises awareness of the dangers of leaving pets in parked cars and empowers law enforcement to make decisions on behalf of an animal's welfare.

The law states that an officer or emergency responder must have a good-faith and reasonable belief that the dog or cat is in imminent danger, make a reasonable effort to locate the driver of the motor vehicle, take reasonable steps to ensure or restore the well-being of the dog or cat, use no more force than necessary to enter the motor vehicle, and leave notice on the vehicle about where the dog or cat can be retrieved.

This law does not give civilians the authority to take this type of action. If you see a dog or cat in a motor vehicle that appears to be in distress, contact the local authorities. Do not enter the motor vehicle yourself.

What Many Pet Owners Don't Know

Most dog owners know that you can't leave a pet in a hot car; however, many don't realize that leaving a pet in a hot car with windows down makes no difference. According to the [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#), a parked car with the windows cracked heats up at almost the exact same rate as a car with the windows rolled up, putting pets in danger.

In fact, temperatures can rise to dangerous levels in just minutes, putting your dog at risk of heat stroke. The inside of a vehicle parked in [70-degree weather can reach 100 degrees in just 20 minutes](#). On very hot days, temperatures inside parked cars can climb to 140 degrees in less than one hour.

How to Report Pets Left in Hot Vehicles

- Call 911 and if possible, citizens should stay with the vehicle until authorities arrive and write down pertinent information like the time, location and make and model of the vehicle.
- Do not confront the owner should he or she return to the vehicle before authorities arrive — just jot down the time and description of the person so authorities can attempt a follow-up investigation.

Subscribe to PennDOT news in in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Indiana and Jefferson counties at www.penndot.gov/District10.

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