

# Dog Days Of Summer!

— Flotilla 84, USCG Auxiliary —



This message is being brought to you by Flotilla 84, USCG Auxiliary, located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in partnership with the Companions Animal Center, in Hayden, Idaho. Summer is in full swing in North Idaho and the temperatures are soaring! It is a good time to remind pet owners to be cautious with their furry friends both on and off the water. Heat is not your dog's best friend – you are!

The sight of a dog at the bow of a boat with their head in the wind is delightful and almost always brings a smile to everyone. Preparing for dog safety is easy and critical for a successful and safe boating adventure. The captain of the boat should provide the dog with a harness, flotation vest, fresh water, and some shade.

The first recommendation is to place the dog in a harness instead of a regular collar as the dog may be tethered while underway. Neck injuries or worse can happen to a dog that is wearing a simple collar and tethered to the boat deck in rough water. A harness provides safety and security to help prevent serious injury.

Second, secure a flotation vest made for dogs. Even if the dog is a very good swimmer, eventually they will tire, and drowning is an alarming danger. When purchasing a dog flotation vest, select one based on color, buoyancy, appropriate size and fit, and safety features. Shop around for a vest with a highly visible color and easily seen on the water. One of the best color choices is Coast Guard orange. A grab handle

or two on the top allows for an easy grip on the dog.

The third preparation is for clean water provisions. Readily available environmental sources of water can contain parasites and other things that may be harmful. A water bowl and plenty of clean water should be a part of the float plan. Heat exhaustion and dehydration in dogs are serious conditions that require immediate attention.

The fourth critical preparation is providing shade for the dog. There should be some shade available where the dog can rest and cool down. A cabin or a Bimini top are two good examples that can provide adequate shade. Even an open beach towel held by two people high above the dog will provide some temporary shade.

If your dog jumps or falls overboard, immediately turn off the engine. Call the dog by name to encourage them to swim to the boat. If the dog does not respond to calling their name, you might consider a water rescue. Getting into the water must be thought out carefully with safety as the top priority. Wear a life jacket when you are in the water. After rescuing the dog, if it is small, you can simply grasp the life vest hand strap and lift it onboard. A very large dog can present a very difficult lifting situation. Some boat owners have a dog ramp or steps that can be deployed. It would be perfect if there were plenty of muscular passengers on the boat to help hoist the dog up from the water and over the gunwale.

Boating with a dog can be a wonderful adventure that takes just a little planning for a rewarding experience.

## On Shore

A dog's feet are extremely sensitive to heat. Avoid walking them on hot asphalt, concrete, sidewalks or sand. A beautiful 85 degree day with cool breezes could set your sidewalk to a toasty 120 degrees or more. Use the back of your hand, or bare foot to make sure it's not too hot for your pet. Grass is always the preferred choice.

When you turn off your car, all ventilation stops. A car's interior can reach high temperatures even in the shade. On an 80 degree day, a car's interior can reach 160 degrees in a few minutes, even in the shade. Pets in hot cars are at risk for brain damage, heat stroke, even death!

Just a few safety precautions can make your summer a tail waggin' good time!