

Procedure

11.31

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
4-8-21**

Eugene Police Department



Animal Heat Emergencies

11.31.1 Purpose and Scope

Animals left in hot vehicles and exposed to extreme heat can quickly suffer from permanent brain damage. An animal locked in a hot car can suffer from heat stress in as little as six minutes and may result in death. It is important to evaluate each situation to determine if the animal is in immediate danger and proceed accordingly to ensure the welfare of the animal.

11.31.2 City Code/ORS

- Eugene City Code: Chapter 4 Offenses - Animal Regulations 4.340, 4.370(5)
- Oregon Revised Statute: ORS 167.310(2.b.c), 167.325, 167.330

11.31.3 Officer Responsibility

Officers (Police, Animal Welfare and/or Community Service) responding to animals in hot vehicles will assess the situation to determine if the animal is in immediate danger.

1. Is the animal in distress? Signs and symptoms of an animal in danger of or experiencing heat stroke:
 - a. Rapid Breathing
 - b. Excessive Panting
 - c. Severe Respiratory Distress
 - d. Frantic behavior (clawing at window, bulging eyes, obvious distress)
 - e. Seizure
 - f. Lethargy
 - g. Unresponsiveness
2. Make reasonable attempts to locate owner.
 - a. Call or contact business/residence where vehicle is found, and attempt to locate owner
 - b. Utilize vehicle information to find owner information to make contact
 - c. Question bystanders for information
3. Take temperature of inside of the vehicle with Infrared-thermometer if available.
 - a. Take temperature through the crack of an open window if possible
 - b. Take the temperature in multiple points within the vehicle (front dash, back dash, and area the animal is located)
 - c. Record temperature readings (document and photo of reading)
 - d. Document if water is accessible to the animal, and if able, take the temperature of the water.

4. If the animal is a dog, note the breed and other characteristics. Take photos and/or video of the dog inside the vehicle, the vehicle, license plate and surrounding area.
 - a. Dogs that are of a short-nosed breed, thick coats, are puppies or senior, or that seem to be overweight are quicker to succumb to heat related injuries or death. These observations also need to be documented.

Owner Located:

1. Ensure that they check on their animal and verify that it does not need any medical attention.
2. Use the opportunity to educate the owner of the severity of the situation.
3. It is at the Officer's discretion whether to issue a warning, citation in lieu of custody, or make an arrest for Animal Neglect.

Owner Not Located:

1. If the owner is unable to be located and the Officer has probable cause to believe that the animal may be in danger of dying, forced entry may be made into the motor vehicle to remove the animal for care and impoundment at either the Emergency Veterinary Hospital or Greenhill Humane Society (4.370(5)).
2. Considerations for gaining entry:
 - a. Check for unlocked doors.
 - b. Attempt to unlock a door through an open window (if any).
 - c. Break a side window, if possible, taking into consideration the location of the animal and officer safety.
 - d. When access is gained to the vehicle, make sure you have some form of leash or restraint for the animal.
 - e. Move the animal to a shady spot or into air conditioning, provide cool drinking water, apply cool water to paws, neck and head (if available).
 - f. If the animal appears stable, and the owner has not been found, the animal should be transported to Greenhill Humane Society for impound.
 - g. Complete and place an Evidence/Property form in the vehicle. Secure the vehicle if possible. Transport the animal to Greenhill and indicate, "Do Not Release," for Neglect.
 - h. If the animal is not stable, it should be transported to Emergency Veterinary Hospital for medical care.

Complete and place an Evidence/Property form in the vehicle before securing the vehicle.

Transport the animal to the Emergency Veterinary Hospital. The emergency staff will evaluate the animal and determine if the animal is stable enough to go to Greenhill or will need to remain at the animal hospital. A "Do Not Release" for Neglect will need to be stated on the Impound Form.

- i. If an animal is found deceased in a hot vehicle, the officer must take photographs of the scene, collect evidence such as temperature readings, location of the vehicle and other witness statements before removing the dead animal. A warrant may be required to enter the vehicle if the animal is obviously deceased, and exigency has dissipated.

- j. The Officer shall package the dead animal as evidence following proper evidence collection procedures and lodge in the refrigerator at ECU. Note,

Route all related reports to Animal Welfare Unit.

11.31.4 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

A supervisor should respond to document any damage caused by EPD.

Chris Skinner
Chief of Police