



## Grafton Dog Obedience Club Inc.

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### TRAVELLING WITH YOUR DOG IN HOT WEATHER

**A dog left in a parked vehicle in hot weather, especially on our very hot north coast, can die in a matter of minutes** (as can babies and small children).

Fortunately the majority of cars these days have air conditioning which will help to keep your dog comfortable when travelling. If you don't have air conditioning, consider using a cool-down mat and stop often to offer your dog a drink of water. If your dog is hot, wetting the pads of his feet, with either a sponge or spray bottle is the quickest way to cool him down. Also sponging/spraying your dog around the base of the ears, armpits, belly and between the back legs (areas where blood circulates close to the skin) with cool water helps to cool him quickly.

Don't allow your dog to travel with his head outside the vehicle because of the risk of eye injury from dust and flying debris. If your vehicle isn't air conditioned, wind windows down just enough to allow your dog to breathe in fresh air or use the special mesh window inserts that are available to keep your dog safely in your vehicle while allowing him access to fresh air.

If your dog travels in the back of a ute, you need to take extra precautions. Firstly, your dog must by law be safely secured in the back of your ute. Your dog will also need protection from the hot sun. You may be travelling in comfort in the air conditioned cab but your dog is exposed to the full heat of the sun. Dark coloured dogs are especially vulnerable to heat injury while dogs with pink skin are at risk of sunburn and eventually skin cancers. The tray of the ute can also become so hot that it burns your dog's feet.

If you must leave your dog in a parked vehicle in warm weather, take the following precautions. Park in the shade, either under a tree with a dense canopy or park in a covered car park. Use a sunshade to block any direct sun. Wind all your windows down enough for your dog to get fresh air but not enough for your dog to escape. Leave at least 2 bowls of cool water (or use a special spill-proof water bowl that is designed not to leak if tipped over). Check on your dog at least every 10 minutes.

Another alternative if you absolutely have to take your dog with you in hot weather, is to place your dog in a crate in the car so that you can leave your windows fully down when away from your vehicle (see previous article on crate training your dog). Obviously this will only be practical if you will be nearby to ensure your vehicle's security.

**Remember your dog can die within minutes if left in your vehicle in hot weather.** Don't take that risk with your special friend.

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