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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **SDHS Urges Hikers to Leave Dogs at Home During Summer Heat**

*Dogs should never be heavily exercised when the temperature is above 70 degrees.*

**San Diego** — San Diego Humane Society is urging pet parents to be extra careful and leave their dogs at home when going hiking on days when temperatures will exceed 70 degrees. While hiking is a popular way for dog owners to bond with their pets, dogs are more prone to heat exhaustion and their paws burn easily.

There are several reasons dogs are at risk when hiking on hot days. Dogs — especially smaller breeds — are much closer to the ground where temperatures are hotter. Dogs with black fur absorb sunlight and some breeds have especially thick coats that cause them to overheat more quickly. Even without these added risk factors, an excited dog who is eager to please may not show signs of heat stroke until it is too late as dogs don't have the ability to regulate their exertion level like humans do.



It is important to always be aware of the signs of heat distress in dogs: heavy panting, glazed eyes, a rapid pulse, unsteadiness, a staggering gait, vomiting, or a deep red tongue. If you believe your pet is suffering from heat exhaustion, contact your veterinarian right away — it could save your pet's life. You can also place cool towels or spray water over them to help lower their temperature, especially on their paws.

“Even if it is cool in the morning when you take off, the unexpected could happen and all of a sudden you are miles into a difficult hike when the temperatures rise,” said Chief of Humane Law Enforcement Bill Ganley. “Just last weekend we had a heartbreaking case where an owner with the best intentions lost his dog during a hike because it got too hot. This is preventable and we don't want it to happen to anyone else.”

The body of the dog in question was retrieved by helicopter from the top of Iron Mountain. Helicopter rescues are a partnership between the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service, and are often used to respond to people and pets during hiking emergencies. So far this year, ASTREA helicopters have rescued 280 people on local trails. “Many hikers tend to overestimate their abilities and underestimate the conditions,” said San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore. “These rescues can be taxing to such valuable resources for emergency and fire calls. Preparedness is crucial for a safe and fun experience outdoors.”

### **Dog Hiking Safety Tips:**

1. Never take your dog hiking when temperatures could exceed 70 degrees.
2. Always bring plenty of cold, fresh water for your dog and let them hydrate often. The amount of water depends on the size of your dog and the length of your hike. Generally, dogs can drink up to 1.5 oz of water per pound per day. Dogs who are active and/or in a hot environment may need to drink more.
3. If your dog is slowing down or panting excessively, it's time to give them a break — and then turn around to head back home. Do not encourage a dog showing signs of heat exhaustion to continue hiking.
4. Always keep your pet on a leash while hiking. It is the law, but it also prevents them from running away and getting lost or hurt if they see something in nature, like another animal.
5. Remember your dog's paws are sensitive. Test the temperature of the ground by touching it with the back of your hand for seven seconds. If it is too hot for your hand, it is too hot for your pet's paws. Additionally, a rugged trail can hurt your dog's paws. You can purchase booties to protect them — but give Fido ample time to get used to them as most dogs don't really like them at first!

For more pet heat safety tips, visit [sdhumane.org/staycool](https://sdhumane.org/staycool).

**File b-roll/photos for media use can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/3Cx3JfL>**

**Suggested Tweet:** Safety first! @sdhumane is urging hikers to leave their dogs at home during the summer heat. Dogs should never be heavily exercised when the temperature is above 70 degrees because they are more prone to heat exhaustion and their paws burn easily. [sdhumane.org/staycool](https://sdhumane.org/staycool).

### **About San Diego Humane Society**

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit [sdhumane.org](https://sdhumane.org).