



AUGUST 2026



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Dandelion

O dandelion, rich and haughty,
 King of village flowers!
 Each day is coronation time,
 You have no humble hours.
 I like to see you bring a troop
 To beat the blue-grass spears,
 To scorn the lawn-mower that would be
 Like fate's triumphant shears.
 Your yellow heads are cut away,
 It seems your reign is o'er.
 By noon you raise a sea of stars
 More golden than before.

— Vachel Lindsay, for more see Works of Vachel Lindsay

Board Members Info.PVIWC@gmail.com
Kathy Lewis, President, Newsletter Editor naturelady58@gmail.com
Susan Montgomery, Vice President, Rescue, Web Page pviwcweb@gmail.com
Christina Buckner, Treasurer pvtreasurer@pviwc.org pviwcshowsecretary@gmail.com
Susan Wine, Secretary pvsecretary@pviwc.org
Carole Silverthorne Breeder Referral carolesilverthorne@comcast.net
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER continued

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE NEW AKC POLICY re UNATTENDED DOGS IN VEHICLES and THE PENALTIES AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER FOLLOWING THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS.

Why Do Dogs Pant?

From happy huffs to hot-weather cooldowns, here's what your dog's panting is really telling you.



By Lindsay Boyers. Reviewed by Hannah Hart, DVM, Updated Mar. 11, 2026, Chewy.com

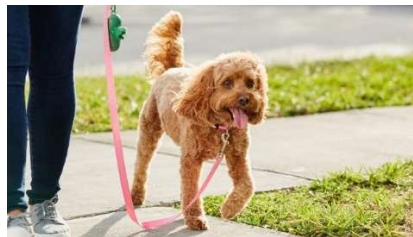


Photo by Chewy

Panting is a normal behavior that helps dogs regulate their body temperature and cool themselves down. Because they don't sweat like humans, panting helps keep them comfortable—and can also reflect excitement or stress. Here's why dogs pant and how to help your pup stay cool.

Key Takeaways

- Panting is a normal behavior that helps dogs regulate their body temperature because they don't sweat like humans do.
- Dogs commonly pant when they're hot, excited, anxious, thirsty, or after physical activity.

- Certain breeds, medications, age-related changes, and body weight can make some dogs pant more than others.
- While panting is usually harmless, sudden changes in breathing patterns or panting without an obvious reason should be discussed with a veterinarian.

Why Do Dogs Pant?

Panting is one of the primary ways dogs regulate their body temperature and respond to their environment, says Wendy Hauser, DVM, founder of Peak Veterinary Consulting in Colorado.

Here are the most common reasons dogs pant—and why it's usually completely normal.

They're Hot, Excited, or Thirsty

Panting helps release excess body heat, Dr. Hauser explains. It's also normal to pant after exercise, play, or when they're feeling excited.

They're Anxious or Stressed

Panting can be a response to emotional stress. If your dog is nervous—like during a thunderstorm or when left alone—you may also notice pacing, whining, or a tucked posture.

They're in Pain

Dogs sometimes pant when they're uncomfortable. Look for other clues, like restlessness, whimpering, or licking a sore spot.

They're Overweight

Carrying extra weight makes it harder to regulate body temperature and can put strain on the heart and lungs, which may lead to more frequent panting.

They're Getting Older

Senior dogs may pant more due to age-related changes, including anxiety, arthritis, or reduced sensory awareness.

They're a Certain Breed

Short-nosed (brachycephalic) breeds like Bulldogs, Pugs, and Boxers tend to pant more because their airways are narrower, making cooling less efficient.

They're on Medication

Some medications, such as prednisone, can increase panting as a side effect. If you notice new or persistent changes after starting a medication, check with your veterinarian.

When Dog Panting May Signal a Problem

Panting is usually normal—but if it's intense, sudden, or paired with other symptoms, it can signal a problem. Common medical reasons include:

- **Heatstroke:** Look for heavy breathing, bright red gums or tongue, thick saliva, vomiting, weakness, or uncoordinated movement. This is an emergency—seek veterinary care immediately.
- **Sudden illness or toxin exposure:** If panting starts abruptly and your dog also seems weak, vomits, or struggles to breathe, head to an emergency vet.
- **Ongoing medical conditions:** Issues like heart disease, Cushing's disease, anemia, or respiratory disorders can increase panting—especially when paired with pale gums, lethargy, increased thirst, or reduced activity.

How To Keep Your Dog Cool

If your dog is panting because they're hot, try these simple steps:

- **Offer fresh, cool water** at all times.
- **Move to shade or indoors** to lower their body temperature.

- **Use cooling gear**, like a cooling vest, to promote airflow.

They Don't Obey — They Understand: (Why the Intelligence of an Irish Wolfhound Doesn't Look Like Anyone Else's)

By Rhea Hill of Emerald Hounds Abound

If you've never lived with an Irish Wolfhound, you might think they're stubborn.

You might think they ignore commands, move at their own pace, or "don't listen."

People who don't know the breed say things like:

"He knows what I'm asking, he just won't do it."

"She takes forever to respond."

"You have to keep repeating yourself."

But if you have lived with a wolfhound, you know the truth:

They're not refusing.

They're thinking.

They are not reactive dogs — they are evaluative dogs.

They do not obey instantly because they were not bred to obey instantly.

They were bred to assess a situation, make a judgment, and act with intention — not impulse.

That is a level of intelligence most people don't recognize because it doesn't look like tricks, precision, or fast obedience.

It looks like awareness.

It looks like presence.

It looks like waiting to understand before choosing what to do.

A wolfhound doesn't ask,

"What do you want from me?"

They ask,

"What are we doing?"

Those are not the same question.

And once they know the answer, they give you everything.

💬 A border collie will do what you ask before you finish the sentence.

💬 A wolfhound will look at you and decide whether your request makes sense.

If it does, they'll do it.

If it doesn't, they'll wait until you make sense.

That's not defiance.

That's discernment.

They don't respond fast because they are not guessing at your meaning.

They are listening for it.

They don't mirror commands.

They mirror your intention.

They don't need to be told twice —

they need to be given a reason.

And when the bond is right, they don't follow you...

They walk with you.

Ask an obedience trainer what they think of wolfhounds, and they'll say,

"They're slow to learn."

Ask someone who has hiked, lived, and shared silence with one, and they'll say,

"No — they can be slow to trust, and once they do, you never need to ask twice."

Because wolfhounds don't learn behavior.

They learn you.

They learn your body language on a trail.

They learn when to stop and when to wait.

They learn the difference between "I'm fine" and "I need a moment."

They learn when your breathing changes, when your heart drops, when your grief rises.

You don't teach a wolfhound to check on you.

They just do.

Because they're not following commands — they're following connection.

They are "scary-smart," not because they perform, but because they perceive.

And that is why, when a wolfhound makes a choice, you feel it.

Not like a dog obeying.

But like a partner deciding.

They do not heel.

They align.

They do not serve.

They share.

They do not come when called out of duty.

They return because the bond pulls stronger than the distance.

You should not make a wolfhound obey you.

But if you are worthy,
they will understand you.

And that is a far greater gift.

Ways to Bond with Your New Puppy

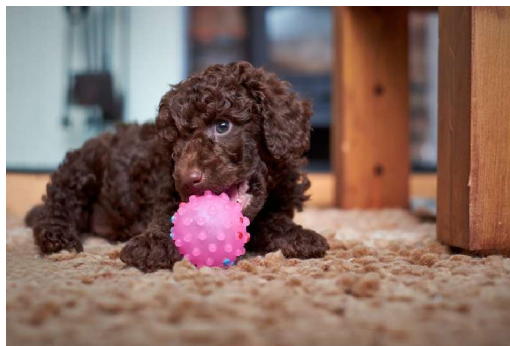
By AKC Staff, Updated: Jun 01, 2026 **AKC**

Bringing home a new puppy is exciting, but building a strong bond doesn't happen overnight. It requires patience, consistency, and daily interaction. By preparing your home, establishing routines, and fully engaging with your dog, you create a foundation of trust. Over time, these efforts help your puppy feel secure and strengthen your connection.

Prepare Your Space for a New Dog

When your puppy comes home, your space should be ready for them. In addition to stocking up on puppy toys, treats, and other playtime essentials, make sure to carefully "puppy-proof" each accessible room:

- Secure electrical and drapery cords
- Cover up electrical outlets
- Lock or secure any doors or drawers that might get your puppy into trouble



Help Your Puppy Explore Safely

Introducing your puppy to their new surroundings right away builds confidence and trust. Using a collar and leash indoors allows you to guide their exploration while keeping them safe.

This approach helps your puppy become comfortable with walking equipment and gives you an opportunity to supervise, redirect, and begin gentle training from day one.

Be Patient During the Adjustment Period

Every new puppy—and owner—needs time to adjust. Your dog is learning new rules, environments, and expectations, while you're learning their personality and needs.

Consistency and patience are key. Calmly reinforcing house rules and sticking to routines will help your puppy understand what's expected without fear or confusion.

Making Careful Introductions

The experience of bringing home a puppy and growing into a pet care expert is always better when it's shared with family and friends. While you don't want to initially overwhelm your puppy with visits from strangers, you can always post photos or videos of them on social media to share these moments with the people in your life.



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Be Fully Engaged in Your Interactions

When it comes to bonding with your dog, it's important to truly commit. Try not to let your phone steal your attention during walks or games of fetch. Your dog needs to know that they've got your full attention and that they can rely on you to meet their needs.

Learn to Read Canine Body Language

Even without words, your puppy is constantly communicating. Paying attention to their body language helps you better understand their emotions and needs.

Over time, noticing cues such as posture, movement, and energy levels will guide your training approach and strengthen your ability to respond appropriately.

Introduce and Reinforce a Routine

New experiences can overwhelm a young dog. To minimize stress and optimize the housetraining process, establish routines early and often. Better yet, teach your dog to associate these expected behaviors with positive reinforcement. Some additional affection or a training treat can help gain your dog's trust and attention, while discouraging unwanted behaviors, such as tugging at the leash during walks or eliminating indoors.



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Be Ready for Some Sleepless Nights

New puppy owners should count on having their sleep interrupted for some time after bringing their dog home. However, nighttime bathroom breaks are much simpler when dogs and their owners share a bedroom.

Depending on your dog's size and temperament, you may wish to crate them bedside, or set up a puppy-sized bed within an exercise pen nearby. Whatever your arrangement, keeping your dog close by helps reduce the risk of accidents and strengthen your bond.

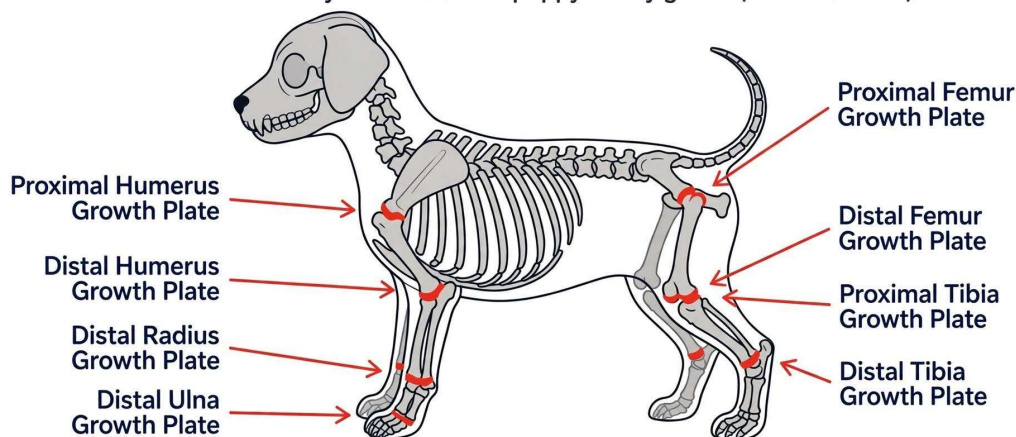
Building a bond with a new dog takes time and effort. Don't get discouraged if you experience setbacks. With patience and persistence, your bond will grow stronger the more time you spend together.

Key Takeaways

- Bonding with a puppy requires patience, consistency, and daily interaction
- Preparing your home and establishing routines helps reduce stress
- Being fully present during training and play strengthens trust
- Learning your puppy's body language improves communication
- Early challenges, like sleepless nights, are part of the bonding process

PUPPY SKELETON – GROWTH PLATES

Growth plates are cartilage zones at the ends of bones where growth occurs. Highlighted in red — they close when the puppy is fully grown (~12–18 months).



For Pet Owners:

- Growth plates are softer than bone and more prone to injury until fully closed.
- Avoid excessive jumping or rough play until growth plates close.

Legend: — Bright Red Band = Growth Plate (Epiphyseal Plate)

Can Dogs Drink Coffee?

By Kaitlyn Arford, Updated: May 10, 2024 **AKC**

If you're a coffee connoisseur who can't survive without their morning java, we understand. But keep a sharp eye out. While humans often need that jolt of caffeine to start the day, coffee can hurt and even kill dogs.

A lick or two of coffee (or even soda or tea) typically isn't enough to cause poisoning in most dogs. But if your dog ingests unused coffee grounds or beans or tea bags, it could cause serious toxicity.

If you know your dog drank coffee or ate coffee grounds or beans, you need to monitor them for signs of toxicity. Immediately call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Helpline (855-213-6680) for medical advice.

Why Do Dogs Drink Coffee?

Dogs are naturally curious creatures who taste whatever treats they can get. Sometimes they will eat grass, rocks, toilet paper, and, perhaps most disgustingly, poop. Since they'll even drink from the toilet, why wouldn't they be intrigued by the scent of your morning cup of joe?



©American Kennel Club

What to Do If Your Dog Drinks Coffee

Dogs are more sensitive to caffeine than humans are. A few laps of your morning brew likely won't contain enough caffeine to poison your dog, but it could make them sick. But if you have a small dog, like a Shih Tzu, Yorkshire Terrier, or Affenpinscher, you need to monitor them closely as it will affect them more than a larger dog. If your dog eats coffee

grounds, it could lead to serious poisoning, as they have a higher concentration of caffeine.

Call your veterinarian immediately if you think your dog drank coffee or consumed coffee products, like beans or grounds. You can help your veterinarian evaluate the potential risk by having an estimate of your dog's weight and the amount of coffee they consumed readily available.

If your veterinarian isn't available, contact the Pet Poison Hotline immediately. This hotline can help you locate the nearest emergency facility and walk you through first-aid measures. Most dogs will survive caffeine consumption as long as they get help quickly.

Symptoms of Caffeine Poisoning

You can typically see signs of caffeine toxicity within 30 to 60 minutes of consumption. Symptoms can last anywhere between 12 hours to several days. You'll need to monitor your dog for any of these symptoms:

- Agitation
- Restlessness
- Vomiting
- Panting
- Elevated heart rate
- Elevated blood pressure
- Abnormal heart rhythms
- Hyperthermia (elevated body temperature)

In severe cases, collapse, tremors, and seizures are possible. Too much caffeine can kill your dog, but the lethal dose of caffeine varies, depending on the size of your dog.



tirc83/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

How Veterinarians Treat Caffeine Poisoning

Your veterinarian may recommend that you monitor your dog for symptoms of caffeine poisoning and call back if their condition worsens. It's also possible that they'll recommend that you bring your dog in for an examination.

A veterinarian may be able to induce vomiting if it's within a few hours of when your dog ingested the caffeine, so that your pup's body doesn't continue to absorb it. Never induce vomiting on your own.

Sometimes a veterinarian will give a dog activated charcoal to help rid their body of toxins without them absorbing into the bloodstream. They may also give them fluids to flush the caffeine from their body or administer medications to control heart rates, tremors, and seizures.

How to Prevent Your Dog from Drinking Coffee

Keep all caffeinated products like coffee, coffee grounds, coffee beans, chocolate-covered espresso beans, and tea bags, off the ground and out of reach of your dogs. When you're done brewing your morning joe, always put the pot and cup up out of the way. That includes not placing it where it can be easily knocked over and licked off the ground.

When you throw away your coffee grounds, close up the trash bag and make sure it's completely inaccessible to your dog. Some dogs, like Labrador Retrievers, like to fetch treats out of the trash. Remind your children, family, roommates, and guests that coffee needs to be kept away

from your dog. If you're giving coffee as a gift, keep them in a place where your dog can't get into them.

As a general rule, it's a good idea to teach your dog the "leave it" command to prevent them from eating something they shouldn't.

Taking Your Dog to the Beach: Tips & Safety

By Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT, Updated: Jun 16, 2026 **AKC**

A visit to the beach is an ideal way to spend a summer day, and it can be tempting to take your dog along.

While going to the beach isn't the best option for all dogs, for the right ones, it offers new sights, sounds, and smells to experience as well as opportunities for exciting games. There are potential dangers to be aware of, too, of course. Maximize your fun by trying these activities, training these behaviors, and watching for these hazards.

Beach Activities You Can Do With Your Dog

You can do many of your dog's favorite backyard activities at the beach. For example, you can play tug-of-war or provide your dog with their favorite puzzle toy. But don't miss out on all the opportunities for beach-related excitement. Here are some activities to try on your next beach outing.

Fun on the Shore

Go for a walk and let your dog explore the shore. Take it slow and let them take in new experiences like sniffing seaweed, watching scuttling crabs, or chasing seagulls. But don't let your dog eat the seaweed or sand, both of which are dangerous for dogs to consume.

If your dog loves to dig, they'll have a great time playing in the sand. Alternatively, you can build sandcastles and then let your dog destroy them.

For a game of fetch on the beach, bring along a ball or flying disc. Be sure to choose a quiet spot so your dog's enthusiasm for the game doesn't disturb other beachgoers.



rebeccaashworth/Shutterstock

Activities in the Water

If your dog is new to the water, teach them to swim at their own pace. Be sure to fit them with a life jacket to provide extra confidence. Remember, even experienced dogs need constant supervision while they're in the water. If your dog is a confident swimmer, see if they might enjoy balancing on a board and surfing the waves. Learning to balance is also great for dog sports, such as agility. And if the water is calm enough, get your dog's life jacket and try a canoe or kayak ride together.

When playing fetch in the water, choose a brightly-colored floating toy so your dog can spot it on top of the waves. Be sure to stick to relatively shallow water, as a bad throw can send your dog too far out from the shoreline. Splashing through the waves is a fun game, too, but your dog can easily overtire. So, stay close to shore and don't leave your dog's side.

Whatever activities you decide to pursue, always supervise your dog. It's important for your dog's safety, but it's also part of responsible dog ownership. Don't let your dog disturb wildlife, damage vegetation, or become a nuisance to other people or dogs on the beach.



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Training Your Dog Ahead of a Beach Outing

To ensure a safe and enjoyable beach day, make sure your dog has these skills down before you go.

Recall and Basic Obedience

Before going to the beach, your dog should have a reliable recall. Many activities require letting your dog off-leash, so you need to be certain they'll come back to you when called.

All your dog's basic obedience behaviors should be under your control with either a hand signal or verbal cue. If your dog isn't ready for that kind of freedom, stick to on-leash pursuits like walks along the shore.

'Leave It'

A solid "leave it" is another important cue for your dog to understand. It tells your dog to leave something alone — whether that's garbage on the beach, a dead fish at the water's edge, or food in somebody else's picnic basket. With enough practice, this cue can also tell your dog to ignore something like wildlife or other beachgoers.

Comfort Around Crowds

Your dog should also be well-socialized and comfortable sharing toys with others. Beaches can get busy, and your dog might encounter loads of people and other dogs. For a social butterfly, that's all part of the fun. However, if your dog is uncomfortable around people or other dogs, choose quiet times to visit the beach, such as earlier on a weekday morning, rather than peak hours.



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Bulldog wading in a lake.

What to Watch for When at the Beach with Your Dog

There are some obvious dangers at the beach like rough waves, but you might not be aware of other hazards like drinking salt water. There are also rules to follow like leash laws and scooping up your dog's waste. The following list will help you know what to watch for at the beach:

- Check the rules. Not all beaches and swimming areas allow dogs. And some locations only allow them on certain days or at certain times. It's also important to follow the leash regulations. Your dog might be allowed off-leash in some areas but not others.
- Watch for heatstroke. Provide your dog with shade and plenty of chances to rest. You might also have them wear protective gear, like a sun hat or cooling vest. Consider limiting your beach visits to early or late in the day when the sun isn't as strong.
- Apply sunscreen to your dog. Dogs can suffer from sunburn, so use pet-safe sunscreen on your dog's nose, ears, and any other areas with sparse fur.
- Provide lots of fresh water. Your dog can easily dehydrate in the heat of summer, so bring an insulated dog bowl and frequently offer cool water to drink. Try to limit the amount of salt water your dog may drink as it can make them sick.
- Prevent your dog from eating sand. It can block your dog's intestines, causing an impaction.

- Speak to a lifeguard about the water conditions. Situations such as rough waves or strong currents can make the water too dangerous for your dog.
- Be on the lookout for dangerous sea animals, like stingrays and jellyfish, that could be near the shore.
- Avoid hot sand. Especially at midday, sand can get blisteringly hot and can burn your dog's paw pads. Consider booties to protect their feet or stick to walking along the water's edge.
-

Key Takeaways

- Not all dogs are suited for the beach; preparation and supervision are essential
- Mix familiar games with new beach-specific activities to keep your dog engaged
- Focus on recall, obedience, and "leave it" before visiting
- Watch for hazards like heat, dehydration, wildlife, and hot sand
- Follow local beach rules and always prioritize safety

What If My Dog Eats Sand? Dangers of Sand Ingestion in Dogs

By Harriet Meyers, Updated: Jan 11, 2024 **AKC**



rebeccaashworth/Shutterstock

It's summertime, and what could be better than a day at the beach with your best canine pal? For your dog, you should pack beach-friendly dog gear, like canine sunscreen, fresh water, insulated dog bowl, dog water bottle, dog towel, dog-friendly tennis balls, life jacket, and you're ready to go!

But suppose each time your dog retrieves that tennis ball on the beach, it becomes covered with sand. Before you know it, your outfielder has swallowed a decent amount of those tiny particles. So, what's the problem?

Dogs who visit the beach are in danger of what veterinarians call intestinal sand impaction. This condition can make dogs very sick and is potentially life-threatening, typically requiring emergency veterinary intervention.

Particles of sand are very tiny, but when they get wet, they become heavy and compact into a solid lump. Any sand your dog swallows naturally becomes wet – and if there's enough of it, the result can block the entire intestinal tract.



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How and Why Would a Dog Ingest Sand?

You may not see your dog actually chowing down on a pile of sand, but you may notice your pal:

- Grabbing a wet, sandy tennis ball over and over
- Digging a big hole to lie in as the sand flies up in their face
- Licking the sand off of their paws and body
- Gulping down salty, sandy water

Usually, swallowing just a little bit of sand won't really hurt your dog. But add all of these activities together, and before you know it, you and your dog may have a big problem.

Symptoms of Sand Impaction

How can you tell when your enthusiastic playmate has swallowed too much sand? If you've gone to the beach and you see the following symptoms, you need to get your dog to a veterinarian right away.

- Restlessness
- Panting
- Vomiting
- Dehydration
- Abdominal pain
- Hard mass in the stomach area
- Constipation

Sand Impaction Treatment

According to Dr. Jerry Klein, Chief Veterinary Officer for the AKC, the veterinarian will ask you questions about your dog's activities, will examine the dog's abdominal area, and most likely do an ultrasound or X-ray.

Your dog may need to receive medication for pain and IV fluids to help pass the sand that is lodged in the GI tract. This can require hospitalization. In extreme cases, surgery may be necessary.

Sand Impaction Prevention



There are several steps you can take to prevent your dog from ingesting enough sand to be dangerous. These include:

- Watch your dog closely at the beach. If you see them gobbling up the sand, tell them to “leave it.”
- When you go to the beach, consider taking toys that won’t absorb as much sand as a tennis ball, like a flying disc.
- Take plenty of fresh water and be sure to make it available to your dog at all times. Don’t allow them to drink the salt water. In addition to swallowing sand, they’re at risk for developing saltwater poisoning.
- When you leave the beach, bathe or hose off your pup as soon as possible. This will remove the sand from their coat and feet, prevent them from licking it off, and also make them more pleasant company.

Other Risks for Your Dog at the Beach

Dogs love the beach, and we love having them with us. In order to make sure the experience is a good one, keep the following risks in mind (in addition to sand impaction and saltwater poisoning):

Heatstroke

Since dogs don’t sweat like we do, their body temperature can shoot up dangerously high on a sunny day at the beach, putting them at risk for heatstroke. It’s best to leave them inside during the hottest part of the day and bring them out in the morning or evening. Provide shade and fresh, cold water at all times.

Sunburn

Some dogs are at a greater risk for sunburn than others. Hairless breeds and dogs with white coats are more susceptible, however. It’s not safe to share your sun lotion with your dog. Dog sunscreen and shade are necessities.



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Hot Sand

We've all walked on sandy beaches in bare feet and had to hot-foot it to the water as fast as we can. If the sand is too hot for your feet, it's also too hot for your dog's paws. Dogs can burn and blister their paw pads on hot sand.

Jellyfish

The Pet Poison Helpline recommends keeping dogs away from jellyfish. If they do come into contact with a jellyfish, bring them to the vet immediately. If they eat a dead jellyfish, they'll probably vomit.

A dog coming into contact with a jellyfish "can cause acute respiratory distress, dry eyes, urinary retention, and cardiac arrest."

Strong Currents

Many dogs are natural swimmers, but some may need to learn to swim. And any dog can be carried out by a strong current. Consider using a doggy life vest to keep your dog afloat if they get into trouble.

Seaweed

Don't let your dog eat wild seaweed at the beach. Dry seaweed can contain toxins and will absorb water and swell inside the stomach, which can cause a blockage and result in emergency surgery.

If there's a beach calling to you, and local laws allow your dog to accompany you there – taking the time to plan and being a responsible owner will contribute to a joyful experience for both of you.

Is It Dangerous for Dogs to Drink Salt Water?

By Anna Burke **AKC**, Updated: Dec 06, 2024

Anyone who has ever swallowed a mouthful of salt water when swimming in the ocean knows how unpleasant it tastes. But when dogs drink salt water, it can be dangerous for them, and it can even be deadly.

Dogs Drinking Salt Water

Dogs love the beach, but playing games of fetch, chasing waves, and swimming can all lead to a thirsty dog who consumes salt water. In most cases, a few mouthfuls of salt water may only cause diarrhea. Consuming large amounts of salt water, however, can be fatal.

When a dog ingests salt water, the excess salt draws water from the blood into the intestines, leading to diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration. Salt water also disrupts the fluid balance in your dog. Dogs with toxic levels of sodium in their systems have a mortality rate higher than 50%, regardless of treatment.

When too much salt builds up in a dog's body, their cells release their water content to try and balance out the sodium disparity. This, in turn, causes a litany of serious health effects. It can cause seizures, a loss of brain cells, injury to the kidneys, and severe dehydration. If a dog with saltwater poisoning isn't treated medically, the condition can easily lead to death.



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Treating Saltwater Poisoning in Dogs

If you suspect that your dog has consumed a toxic amount of salt water, your best bet is to get them to the veterinarian as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, there is no specific treatment for saltwater poisoning in dogs.

Your veterinarian will attempt to restore your dog's water and electrolyte balance to normal levels. Lowering sodium levels too quickly, however, can be dangerous, increasing the likelihood of cerebral edema (fluid on the brain). A veterinarian will administer IV fluids to try and flush the excess salt out of your dog's body. Your vet will also monitor your dog's electrolytes and can provide treatment for brain swelling, control seizures, and offer supportive care.

In ideal cases, the water and electrolyte balance will be restored over a period of 2-3 days. This usually involves hospitalization. Further supportive care and medications may be given, depending on your dog's condition.

Symptoms of Saltwater Poisoning in Dogs

Drinking excessive amounts of salt water typically results in vomiting within a few hours. While mild cases may only involve a few bouts of diarrhea, in severe cases the dog may suffer from weakness, diarrhea, muscle tremors, or seizures. If your dog shows any of these signs, even diarrhea, call your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency hospital for advice.

One of the most noticeable symptoms of dog saltwater poisoning is odd behavior. Too much sodium in the body can cause your dog to become confused, non-responsive, or lethargic.



Preventing Saltwater Poisoning

The amount of salt water required to reach toxic levels depends on your dog's access to fresh water. The best thing you can do to keep your dog safe at the beach is to make sure they always have access to fresh water. If you notice your dog drinking ocean water, restrict their access, provide them with fresh water and shade, and keep an eye on out for signs of toxicity. Take a break away from the water every 15 minutes to help avoid salt poisoning, as well.

Can a Dog Have Too Much Fresh Water?

Dogs can also drive their salt content too low if they drink too much fresh water when swimming in a lake or pool, according to Heather Loenser, DVM, Chief Veterinary Officer at Suveto. "The body works very hard to regulate the balance of salt and water," she says. "If your dog's behavior changes after swimming in either fresh or saltwater, take them to the vet immediately for bloodwork."

Blue-Green Algae Poisoning in Dogs

You should also be aware of potential blue-green algae poisoning in lakes and ponds. This so-called "algae" isn't actually a type of algae but a bacteria known as cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria isn't visible to the naked eye, but it often gives the appearance of algae when it clumps together in bodies of water. This bacteria is often found in non-flowing freshwater during hot seasons with little rainfall. Toxic algae can also grow in backyard pools and decorative ponds if they aren't routinely cleaned.

Toxic algae often stink, sometimes producing a downright nauseating smell, yet animals may be attracted to the smell and taste of them, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Do not let your dogs drink directly from lakes or ponds, especially if you sense the water might have algae. If you suspect your dog has come in contact with the toxins, rinse your dog off with clean water and call your veterinarian immediately.



Understanding Thunderstorm Anxiety in Dogs

By Saige Driver, Updated: Sep 30, 2025 **AKC**

When you're a dog lover, it can be tough to watch your normally calm pet get stressed out during a thunderstorm. While some dogs show mild signs of stress, like licking their paws, other dogs can get so worked up during storms they may get destructive.

To better understand why some dogs hate thunderstorms, we talked to Trista Miller, a CPDT-certified trainer and AKC Canine Good Citizen and Trick Dog Evaluator. Here's what we learned.

Why Are Dogs Scared of Thunder?

Trainers and experts might not know every reason why dogs hate thunderstorms, but Miller believes it has a lot to do with the loud sounds. “Of course, dogs are so much more sensitive to sounds — their hearing is so much more powerful than ours — so they can often detect thunder way before we can,” she explains.

She also believes it’s instinctual. “It’s a survival thing to be afraid of loud noises, to want to find shelter,” she says. “Thunder is a big part of it. But, I think dogs are also sensitive to changes in air pressure and potentially static electricity. So, I think there could also be some unheard, unseen things that dogs can catch that we do not.”



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Signs of Thunderstorm Anxiety

While it can be easy to get angry at your dog for being destructive or whining during a storm, it’s important to take the time to understand why your dog is acting this way and learn how to help. The best way to soothe your dog is by knowing their body language.

Dogs are really good at communicating with their body language. “They can read other dogs’ body language really well, they can read our body language really well, but we’re usually oblivious to theirs,” Miller says. “A lot of people misunderstand what their dog is trying to communicate.”

For example, when a dog yawns, it’s because they’re likely stressed out. If you can start identifying these behaviors before a thunderstorm, you can have a plan in place before it escalates. Other signs to look for include:

- Paw licking

- Pacing
- Whining
- Destructive behavior
- Shaking or trembling

How to Soothe Your Dog During Storms

When there's a thunderstorm and your dog starts to get nervous, here are some tips and tricks for calming them down.

Give Them a Safe Space

The best thing you can do for your dog is to let them go to their safe space, and not punish them for any behavior during thunderstorms, including destruction and whining. Miller explains that dogs like going to a space like their crate or a dark closet during a thunderstorm because it's familiar and soothing.

"Dogs descended from wolves and were in dens, and so they still like den-like environments," she says. "So giving them that smaller space eliminates anything sneaking up on them. If they're in an enclosed space where they are comfortable and familiar, that's going to be more soothing to them."



Richard Unten/Moment Open via Getty Images

Provide Background Noise

If your dog can't hear the thunder or see the lighting, they'll be less stressed. In addition to providing a safe space that's dark and covered, provide background noise to reduce stimulation. Like humans, dogs feel

uneasy when they unexpectedly hear a loud sound, and having background noise helps.

“You can play white noise — or classical music is especially calming to dogs,” Miller says. “Talking in a soothing manner, and, if your dog likes it, pet them in long, calming strokes.”

Offer Comfort Items

Chew and puzzle toys can also help your dog during a thunderstorm. “If your dog gets destructive, chewing and licking are self-soothing behaviors,” Miller says. “If your dog naturally tends to do those things when they’re upset, giving them positive outlets for that can be really helpful.”

She suggests buying toys that help with chewing or licking, like a lick mat. You can smear the mat with peanut butter, cream cheese, or another spreadable snack, then your dog can work to get the treat off it.

In addition, calming treats, CBD oil, KONGs filled with peanut butter or kibble, or anxiety vests can be helpful. “Any of those would be super good for dogs,” Miller says. “If they like their crate, give them those fun things in there.”

Working Through Walk Anxiety in Dogs

By Sassafras Patterdale, CPDT-KA, CTDI, Updated: Oct 24, 2025 **AKC**

All dogs need exercise, and that often comes in the form of walks for many dogs. Although dog walks can be a great way to get moving, you may feel that your dog hates going on walks. If they don’t seem excited to go, or they sit or lay down in the middle of walking, it may seem like they don’t enjoy it. Some dogs get stressed on walks because they might react negatively to certain stimuli, like seeing other dogs or people in the neighborhood. Here’s how to understand why dog walks can cause anxiety, how to support your dog, and what type of exercise might be a good alternative.

Why Walks Might Cause Your Dog Anxiety

You might be wondering if your dog hates walks, when in reality, they might just be stressed out by what they come across while out and about. Things that might stress your dog out on a walk depends on what the individual dog finds anxiety-producing. Things that one dog may not even notice could be exactly what upsets or triggers your dog.

Common stressors can include things like seeing another dog or person, skateboards, garbage trucks, bikes, motorcycles, fast-moving traffic, or wildlife, like squirrels or outdoor cats. Every dog is different, so pay close attention to the things that seem to always be around when your dog gets nervous on walks.



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How to Manage Walking a Scared Dog

The sights, sounds, and smells that excite a confident dog can be very overwhelming for an anxious one. Making sure walks are a positive, predictable, and safe experience for your dog will require patience and consistency on your part.

Understand Your Dog's Limits

It's important to understand your dog's boundaries when walking, especially if they're reactive. Fearful dogs who are also reactive will overreact to certain triggers, with the root of this behavior being fear.

A dog's threshold is how far away a trigger needs to be until it doesn't bother your dog. When your dog is calm and comfortable with their environment, they are "below threshold." When your dog is upset or

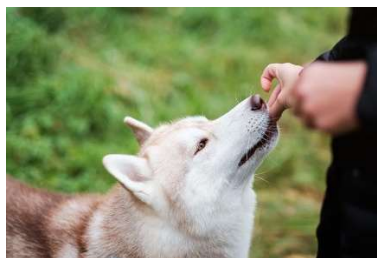
anxious enough to react to triggers, they are “above threshold.” It’s often a fine balance, so it’s important to manage what you know makes your dog anxious to avoid this.

Distance between your dog and the trigger will also impact how they react to it. Some dogs might find it stressful to see a dog or person across the park. For others, a dog across the street is still too close for comfort. Each dog’s threshold is unique to them, and it may shift, depending on the intensity of the trigger. When you understand what stresses your dog, you can plan outings around how to avoid those triggers and how to keep your pet comfortable.

Don’t Push Your Dog

Some dog owners may think that pushing your dog to go on walks will eventually get them to tolerate it more. This attempt to “fix” the problems their dog encounters by walking comes from a place of wanting to get their dog acclimated to the world around them, but exposure is not always best, especially when forced. Constant exposure to stressors, called trigger stacking, is actually most likely going to make your dog feel worse about them.

Fearfulness and reactivity can actually get worse when your dog is forced to face their fears constantly. This doesn’t shift your dog’s emotional response to what they find upsetting. Spacing out your walks, or not walking, gives your dog the space and time that they need to de-stress. It also enables you to create intentional, effective opportunities to work through behavioral issues, like reactivity, in your home or in training sessions.



Working Through Walk-Related Fear

Instead of forcing your dog to go on walks that stress them out, there are a number of other ways you can improve the experience for them. This can range from supporting them when they're afraid, helping them break down their fears, or getting accustomed to things they find stressful. Strategies range from coming prepared with rewards to distract your dog, to changing your routine entirely.

Desensitization and Counterconditioning

If you want to desensitize your dog to certain triggers, you can start by slowly exposing your dog to the trigger. You'll want to start with a bit of exposure here and there and build up more exposure once you can tell that your dog is getting more accustomed to the trigger. Keep their threshold in mind while you're working on this.

For example, if your dog is afraid or stressed by the dog park, you could start with some below-threshold exercises. Instead of going to the dog park, maybe you'll walk closer to the dog park, and over time, get closer to it. It's important to make sure that your dog remains relaxed and below threshold before moving any closer. Otherwise, you'll move too quickly, and they won't feel safe getting closer.

You might also consider counterconditioning your dog. Counterconditioning involves changing the associations your dog has with the trigger. Currently, your dog feels negative emotions every time they see the trigger. Instead, you'll try pairing the trigger with something positive, like a high-value reward, to change their association with it. Eventually, your dog will start connecting a trigger that once made them stressed with something that they love and can be excited about.



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Be Prepared With Rewards

Before heading out on a walk with your dog, be sure to have a treat pouch full of dog treats. We want to reward our dogs for doing desirable behaviors (such as walking calmly or giving eye contact). Dogs are more likely to repeat rewarded behaviors, so we want to make sure focusing on us has a lot of value for them.

Shift Your Routine

Try to adjust your walks to make them less stressful for your dog. Your regular route may include passing a house with lunging and barking dogs in the yard outside, which could be a trigger for your dog. Consider shifting your route so you don't pass that house.

Maybe your dog struggles to remain calm when seeing other dogs on walks, but if you don't have a private yard, you may need to take your dog out for walks more frequently. One of the best things you can do in that case is change the time of day you walk. Instead of walking your dog in the early evening right after work, for example, consider staggering your walk times. That might mean taking your dog out in the early morning or later at night, when fewer people and pets will be out.

If the presence of crowds of people or dogs causes your dog to be anxious, try walking in less-popular areas. For example, instead of going to a busy park, maybe you can take your dog down a quiet, residential street.

Use Distance to Support Your Dog

While walking an anxious dog, it's important to pay close attention to the surrounding environment. That will allow you to spot potential stressors before your dog does, and allow you to move away, creating distance from that trigger. When moving away from a trigger, try to reach a distance that will allow your dog to stay under threshold.

If your dog reacts negatively to people or other dogs, you can create distance by crossing the street. You can also get your dog's attention and move yourselves behind barriers or obstacles, such as parked cars or trees, to block your dog's view of the trigger.



Stefan Mager

Pressing Pause on Walks

If you have a private yard at home, you may be able to press pause on walks while you work through some of your dog's triggers. If you're walking for the purpose of potty breaks, your dog can go to the bathroom in the yard for the time being. If you don't have a yard or don't want your dog going to the bathroom outside, you can limit the amount of time you're walking. Take your dog out just long enough for them to pee or poop, then return home.

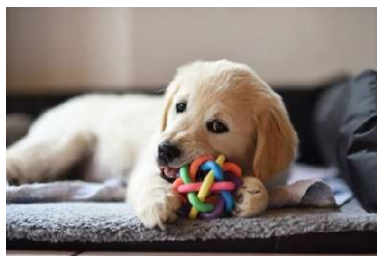
If every walk you take involves your dog having an outburst, it will stress you both out. In addition, these walks provide your dog with a chance to rehearse reactive behaviors like barking and lunging. Giving your dog a break from walks allows them to decompress, improves their feelings of resilience, and helps them be in a better headspace for intentional training sessions. When you go out to train, ideally with an experienced trainer, your dog will be calmer and ready to learn to work through fears and reactivity.

Offer Your Dog More Enrichment at Home

If you can't walk your dog, how do you give them enough exercise and stop them from getting bored? Practicing basic obedience skills in your home or yard or teaching your dog new tricks helps keep them active. You can play scent games by hiding dog food, treats, and dog toys, then encouraging your dog to go find the items. This is a great way to channel your dog's natural instincts to search and forage. Try exercises in the AKC Scent Work Virtual Scent Work Test, which are fun ways to challenge your dog at home.

You can also make or purchase a variety of interactive toys, like puzzle toys or treat-dispensing toys. Solving these toys and puzzles provides engagement and enrichment. You can also play whatever games your dog enjoys, including fetch and tug-of-war, or introduce them to some new brain games for dogs.

You may be able to take your dog to empty spaces where they can enjoy stretching their legs. For example, dog owners can rent private, fenced yards to give their dogs a chance to run, play, and explore without other dogs or people around. You may be able to rent out a local training facility or part of one to exercise your dog.



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How to Reintroduce Walks Eventually

If you have given your reactive dog a break from walks, be intentional when you reintroduce walks into their routine. Ideally, you'll want to do this once your dog has had success in working through their fear and reactivity in training sessions. Then, when you're ready, choose to walk

your dog at times and in places where you're confident, they'll be able to avoid most triggers.

If unexpected triggers come up, try to make the experience as positive as possible for your dog. Be proactive and create distance between them and the stressor. Consider crossing the street or putting a barrier in your way. You can also use treats to distract your dog, which pairs the distant presence of the trigger with something positive.

If you are working with a dog trainer, discuss creating a structured plan together that covers where, when, and how to reintroduce walks.



2026 Meeting and Events

January 11	Regular Meeting
February 8	Regular Meeting
March 2026	<u>St. Patrick's Day Parades</u>
• March 7	Alexandria, VA
• March 8	Annapolis, MD
• March 14	Manassas, VA
• March 14	Gaithersburg, MD
• March 15	Baltimore, MD
• March 21	Harrisburg, PA
March 8 & 9	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Carolinas Specialty Durham Kennel Club, 7318 Guess Road, Durham NC</i>
March 14	Westminster Celtic Center
March TBD	<i>Ellicott City Historic Downtown</i>
March 29 & 30	<i>Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD (Meeting Following Judging)</i>
March 29	<i>Irish Wolfhound Association of Lake Erie Specialty New York State Fairgrounds</i>
April 17 & 18	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 237 Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA
May 2 & 3	Faerie Festival Marshy Point Rocky Point Park in Baltimore County, MD. 2200 Rocky Point Rd, Essex
May 17	Show Wrap Up Meeting
May 18-21	<i>IWCA National Specialty Purina Farms St Louis, MO</i>
May 29 & 30	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Crownsville, MD
June 13 & 14	Carroll County Celtic Festival, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, MD
June 21	Regular Meeting
June 20	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Shrewsbury, PA
June	<i>Celtic Fling (with a concert on Friday night) PA Renn Faire grounds</i>
August 9	Regular Meeting
September-13	Fun Day
September	<i>PA Renn Faire Shamrocks and Shenanigans Weekend</i>
October	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Delaware Valley Specialty</i>
October 18	Regular Meeting
November 13, 14 & 15	Maryland Irish Festival, Timonium, MD
November 22	Regular Meeting
December 13	Holiday Party
December	Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler, Baltimore, MD
December	Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.

Need Volunteers to Host meetings.



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB

Memorandum

Subject: New AKC Policy and Disciplinary Updates Focus on Dog Safety

Date: July 16, 2026

At its July 2026 meeting, the AKC Board of Directors approved a new policy and related disciplinary changes to strengthen protections for dogs at AKC events.

The health, safety, and wellbeing of dogs are at the heart of everything AKC does. In recent months, several incidents involving dogs left unattended in vehicles have resulted in dangerous situations and, in some cases, tragic outcomes. As temperatures rise and these risks increase, the Board determined that additional safeguards are necessary to help prevent future incidents and reinforce the shared responsibility of exhibitors, handlers, and owners to ensure every dog's safety.

Effective immediately, AKC's new **Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy** prohibits leaving dogs unattended in vehicles that are fully enclosed or do not have adequate ventilation and airflow. Simply having fans, air conditioning, temperature monitors, remote alerts, or other electronic devices does not, by themselves, make a vehicle safe for an unattended dog. Owners and handlers are responsible for ensuring dogs are kept in conditions that protect them from heat-related illness, distress, injury, or death.

Violating this policy is considered conduct prejudicial to the best interests of purebred dogs, the sport of purebred dogs, and the American Kennel Club and may result in disciplinary action under the AKC Charter and Bylaws.

The Board also approved two related changes to support the new policy. Effective July 29, 2026, the **Dealing with Misconduct at American Kennel Club Events** guidelines will require an Event Committee hearing whenever a dog is seriously injured or dies in connection with an AKC event, not just when a vehicle is involved. This process allows the committee to review sworn testimony, determine the facts, and ensure these incidents are handled fairly and consistently at events across the country.

The **AKC Discipline Guidelines** have also been updated to include a new disciplinary offense and penalty structure for violations of the Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy. Depending on the severity of the violation and the circumstances involved, penalties may range from a one-year suspension and monetary fines to a lifetime suspension and fines of up to \$10,000.

These changes reinforce AKC's commitment to providing a safe environment for dogs and promoting responsible stewardship at every AKC event.

For more information on this policy contact: Compliancediv@akc.org

Also from the AKC:

Frequently Asked Questions: AKC Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy

Why did the AKC adopt this new policy?

Following several recent incidents involving dogs left unattended in vehicles, including situations that resulted in serious injury and death, the AKC Board of Directors determined that stronger safeguards were necessary to help prevent future tragedies and reinforce the shared responsibility of exhibitors, handlers, and owners to protect dogs at AKC events.

What does the new Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy require?

Effective immediately, the policy prohibits leaving a dog unattended in a vehicle that is fully enclosed or does not have adequate ventilation and airflow.

What is considered a vehicle under this policy?

For purposes of this policy, a vehicle includes any enclosed or partially enclosed motorized conveyance used to transport dogs, including passenger cars, SUVs, pickup trucks, vans, minivans, commercial vehicles, trailers being used to house dogs, motorhomes, recreational vehicles (RVs), and similar vehicles. Regardless of the type of vehicle, owners and handlers are responsible for ensuring dogs are not left unattended in conditions that could compromise their safety or wellbeing.

Are fans, air conditioning, temperature monitors, or remote alert systems enough to comply with the policy?

These are all valuable precautions and can play an important role in helping maintain a safe environment for dogs. However, they should not be the only precautions relied upon.

Fans, air conditioning, temperature monitors, remote alert systems, and other electronic devices do not, by themselves, make a vehicle safe for an unattended dog. Owners and handlers remain responsible for ensuring dogs are kept in conditions that protect them from heat-related illness,

distress, injury, or death. Vehicles should be checked regularly to verify that cooling systems are functioning properly and ventilation is sufficient so that the dogs remain safe and in good condition.

Is the AKC advising that I leave my vehicle unlocked?

No. The AKC is not advising exhibitors, handlers, or owners to leave their vehicles unlocked.

The policy does not prescribe how a vehicle should be secured. Rather, it requires that dogs not be left unattended in conditions that could compromise their health or wellbeing.

Owners and handlers remain responsible for taking all appropriate precautions to ensure the safety of both their dogs and their vehicles.

Who is responsible for complying with the policy?

Every owner and handler is responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of any dog in their care while attending any AKC event.

When does the new policy take effect?

The Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy is effective immediately.

What happens if someone violates the policy?

Violating the policy is considered conduct prejudicial to the best interests of purebred dogs, the sport of purebred dogs, and the American Kennel Club. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the AKC Charter and Bylaws.

What disciplinary penalties may apply?

The AKC Discipline Guidelines now include a specific offense and penalty structure for violations of the policy. Depending on the severity of the violation and the circumstances involved, penalties may range from a one-year suspension and monetary fines to a lifetime suspension and fines of up to \$10,000.

Why is the AKC adopting this policy when many states already have laws regarding dogs left in vehicles?

State laws vary significantly in how they address dogs left unattended in vehicles, including when intervention is permitted and what constitutes a violation. As the governing body for dog sports, the AKC has a responsibility to establish consistent standards of conduct that apply to all participants, regardless of where an event is held. This policy establishes a clear, uniform standard for exhibitors, handlers, and owners and provides the framework for consistent enforcement through the AKC Discipline Guidelines. It is intended to complement, not replace, applicable state and local laws, and all participants are expected to comply with both.

Will previously resolved disciplinary matters be reopened under this new policy?

No. Disciplinary matters that have already been investigated and resolved under the applicable AKC Rules, Policies, and Discipline Guidelines in effect at the time of the incident will not be reopened.

Does this policy apply only to hot weather?

No. While hot weather significantly increases the risk to dogs, the policy is based on providing safe conditions for dogs at all times. Owners and handlers are responsible for ensuring dogs are not left unattended in conditions that could compromise their health, safety, or wellbeing.

What other changes did the Board approve?

The Board approved a related change to the Dealing with Misconduct at American Kennel Club Events guidelines. Effective July 29, 2026, an Event Committee hearing will be required whenever a dog is seriously injured or dies in connection with an AKC event, regardless of whether a vehicle is involved.

What is the purpose of requiring an Event Committee hearing?

An Event Committee hearing allows the committee to receive sworn testimony, review the facts surrounding an incident, and ensure cases are handled fairly, consistently, and in accordance with AKC rules.

What is the overall goal of these changes?

These updates strengthen the AKC's commitment to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of dogs while promoting responsible stewardship and consistent enforcement at every AKC event.

Update from the AKC:

Please see below and attached the statement regarding the Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy.

As previously communicated, any questions or concerns should be directed exclusively to compliancediv@akc.org. The inbox is being actively monitored, and inquiries will be addressed in a timely manner.

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB STATEMENT ON THE UNATTENDED DOGS POLICY:

Thank you to those who have taken the time to share their concerns and comments regarding the Unattended Dogs in Vehicles Policy adopted by the Board at its July 2026 meeting. We appreciate the thoughtful feedback and recognize that exhibitors, breeders, handlers, and judges have a strong interest in ensuring that policies affecting the care and welfare of dogs are both practical and effective.

The primary purpose of this policy is to reinforce a fundamental principle: individuals participating in AKC events are responsible for providing a safe environment for dogs in their care. The policy focuses on situations in which dogs are left unattended in vehicles without adequate ventilation or airflow, creating conditions that may place them at risk of heat-related distress, illness, injury, or death.

The policy does not prohibit or discourage the use of modern vehicle cooling and monitoring technologies, nor does it require that one is at a

vehicle at all times or ban climate-control systems, temperature-monitoring devices, fans, remote alerts, or similar equipment. Rather, it recognizes that no single device or technology can, by itself, guarantee a safe environment. Mechanical, electrical, cellular, software, and human failures can occur without warning.

Accordingly, the policy emphasizes that the presence of technology or specialized equipment does not relieve an individual of responsibility for the safety and welfare of dogs left in their care. If an unfortunate incident occurs, the existence of monitoring or climate-control equipment alone does not establish that reasonable precautions were taken or that the environment remained safe. The responsibility for ensuring a dog's safety ultimately rests with the individual, regardless of the technology being used. For that reason, the policy provides that the mere presence of such devices does not automatically demonstrate that a vehicle is safe for unattended dogs under all circumstances.

Further, AKC's policy is consistent with a broader public policy trend across the United States. Many states have enacted laws that prohibit leaving dogs unattended in vehicles under conditions that endanger their health or safety, particularly during periods of extreme heat or cold. While the specific language and enforcement mechanisms vary by jurisdiction, these laws generally reflect the same underlying principle embodied in AKC's policy: individuals are responsible for ensuring that dogs left in vehicles are maintained in safe conditions and are not exposed to unreasonable risks. The Board's action therefore aligns with widely recognized animal welfare standards that place the safety and well-being of dogs above reliance on any particular technology, device, or method of monitoring.

Questions have been raised regarding how "sufficient ventilation" or a "safe environment" will be interpreted. As with many AKC conduct policies, determinations will be based on the specific facts and circumstances of each situation. The focus is not on the presence or absence of a particular device, but rather on whether the conditions provided were reasonably sufficient to protect the health and welfare of the dogs involved.

It is also important to note that the policy is directed toward conduct that creates an unreasonable risk to dogs. It is not intended to penalize responsible dog owners who take appropriate measures to safeguard their animals. Instead, it strengthens AKC's ability to address situations where dogs are left in conditions that jeopardize their welfare and, by extension, reflect adversely on the sport and the responsible care of purebred dogs.

The AKC recognizes that vehicle designs, environmental conditions, and available technologies continue to evolve. However, the welfare of dogs must remain the guiding consideration. This policy establishes a clear expectation that individuals are responsible for ensuring that unattended dogs are maintained in conditions that remain safe throughout the entire period they are left in a vehicle. The use of technology may be one factor considered in evaluating those circumstances, but it is not a substitute for responsibility, nor does it excuse conduct that results in an unsafe environment or harm to a dog.

AKC remains committed to promoting responsible dog ownership and protecting the health, safety, and well-being of dogs at all AKC events. We appreciate the continued feedback from the community as we work toward that shared goal.

Brandi H. Munden

Vice President

Public Relations & Communications

American Kennel Club