

Solicitor General

Office of the Solicitor General

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132-2021-2894
By email

July 8, 2021

Dear Heads of Council:

With warmer weather underway, it is important to ensure pets across the province remain safe, cool and comfortable. The Ontario government is strongly urging everyone to take the necessary precautions to keep their pets safe and protected during the hot summer months including making sure that pets are not left unattended in a vehicle.

Temperatures inside a vehicle can quickly become much hotter than the temperature outside. The most dramatic rise in temperature occurs within the first 10 minutes that a vehicle is idle. Even at an outdoor temperature of only 25°C, the inside temperature of a car can reach 34°C in as little as 10 minutes and up to 50°C by the time an hour has passed. Pets can be put at risk of serious illness and possibly death as a result of being left in a vehicle during hot weather. If an individual sees an animal in a hot car in distress and is concerned the animal's life is in danger, they should call 911 immediately as it is an emergency. Members of the public are not encouraged to enter a vehicle in these situations.

Pursuant to the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019*, police officers, First Nations Constables, and animal welfare inspectors may enter motor vehicles to remove animals in critical distress. Police officers commonly provide primary response to 911 calls for service across the province related to animals left in motor vehicles.

In addition, the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, provides authority for firefighters to enter motor vehicles to rescue and remove animals in distress, noting that municipal councils set the levels of fire protection services which may include the rescue of animals in motor vehicles.

To support firefighters in exercising this rescue function, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, through the Office of the Fire Marshal, has issued the attached Fire Marshal's Communiqué which provides information about a new, voluntary training e-module available to firefighters. This additional resource may assist fire services to effectively respond to animals left in hot or cold motor vehicles to best safeguard animal welfare.

Where appropriate, municipal councils, through their fire departments, may wish to work with and share this information with local communications and dispatch personnel to support effective dispatch of 911 calls for service related to animals left in hot or cold motor vehicles.

I appreciate your continued partnership to help protect animals in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Jones', written in a cursive style.

Sylvia Jones
Solicitor General

Enclosure

c: Chief Administrative Officers
Municipal Clerks