

Cottage Safety for your Pet

With the arrival of warmer weather, many families take-off for the cottage.

The cottage setting is very different from the urban setting and there are many safety concerns for your pet.

Reminding yourself about the risks and learning more about safety precautions is an important part of preparing for another season at the cottage.

Arriving safely

For your pet's safety and your own, confine her to the back seat, either in a carrier or pet seatbelt (a special harness that attaches to the car's seatbelt) when driving to the cottage.

To help keep your pet comfortable throughout the trip:

- Keep the car at a comfortable temperature using air conditioning when necessary (never leave your pet alone inside the vehicle, even with windows partially open, it only takes minutes for an animal to develop heatstroke)
- Feed your pet a light meal at least four

hours before the trip (to help prevent car sickness)

- Prevent your pet from sticking her head out the window (sudden stops and debris can cause injury)
- Schedule rest stops every two to four hours for exercise, bathroom and water breaks (bring a litter box for cats)
- Attach your pet's leash before opening the car door (to prevent accidental escapes)
- If your pet's not used to traveling use a harness (it's more difficult for your pet to wriggle out of)
- Keep the car sound system volume moderate due to the sensitivity of dogs' and cats' hearing.

Pets on the loose!

People sometimes think that in a cottage setting, pets can be allowed to run at-large.

The sad truth is that many of these pets become lost, are hit by cars or get into fights.

Pets need to be safely confined to the cottage property and be equipped with

identification that carries the address and phone number of your cottage.

If your pet is micro chipped, contact the microchip company and inform them of your weekend address and phone number.

Remember to have the phone number of the local animal control facility and the local animal shelters in your cottage region.

Healthy = happy at the cottage

Pets always need protection against disease and parasites, such as fleas and ticks, especially at the cottage.

Your pet should be up-to-date with his vaccines, especially the rabies vaccine, before you go to the cottage.

You should also speak with your veterinarian about flea and tick medications to help prevent these parasites from infesting your pet while you enjoy the great outdoors.

You should have the phone number of a veterinarian in your cottage area, just in case you need emergency veterinary attention.

Water safety

Boating is a popular activity, especially in cottage country.

If you plan to take your pet out on the water with you be sure to invest in a pet life jacket - even good swimmers can tire easily in rough water, and banks may be slippery or steep to climb.

Life jackets not only keep your pet afloat if she's "jumped ship," they can help protect against hypothermia in cold water and can make it easier to pull her on board.

It's also important to remember that it can get very hot on the water so be sure to provide a shaded area for your pet to rest and bring plenty of fresh water to prevent dehydration and heat stroke.

If you are planning to be on the water for a long period of time you may need to bring a portable potty system (a square piece of turf may work for some dogs or look up "pets and portable potty system" on the Internet).

If you're planning to take your dog swimming follow the following precautions:

- Remove chain training or slip collars before your dog goes into the water.

These collars can snag a dog on hidden underwater obstacles, such as plants, branches or debris.

- Watch the water before allowing your dog to swim. Moving water can be dangerous dogs. Even if the water appears to be moving slowly, the volume of moving water can make it difficult for a dog to swim against the current. If the current or wind appears too strong have your dog splash close to shore and use a leash or long light line to keep your dog nearby.
- Check the water temperature. A dog will generally tire out more quickly in cold water and can lose energy, develop cramps and be at risk for hypothermia .
- Watch your dog swimming at ALL times. Be careful to call your dog out of the water before he's too tired - a tired dog has a much higher risk of drowning.

Pets and wildlife - Be aware!

Problems can arise when your pet encounters a wild animal. Your pet may harass or chase wild animals, who are especially vulnerable during the spring and summer months, when they are having and raising their young.

Pets should NOT be allowed to chase and/or injure wildlife.

Your pet should also be protected from wildlife - keep him on leash, or indoors, at all times.

Quills from a porcupine can be a very painful experience, and skunk spray can sting the eyes.

There is also the small chance that your dog or cat could encounter a rabid animal, and if your pet has not been vaccinated, he could risk contracting the disease.

Following these simple suggestions will help ensure that you, and your pets, enjoy a relaxing time at the cottage this summer.