

What to do if you see a dog in a hot car

1. The dog's not showing signs of overheating yet

Signs of heatstroke include: heavy panting, excessive drooling, lethargy, lack of coordination, or the dog is collapsed and vomiting.

If the dog isn't showing these signs, assess how long the dog has been in the car. You may be able to read the time stamp on the car's parking ticket, for example. Then make a note of the registration.

If the car's in a public car park, you should ask a member of staff to make an announcement over the PA, or ask them to monitor the dog's condition.

2. The dog's showing signs of overheating

If the animal is showing signs of heatstroke, call 999 immediately, **not** the RSPCA.

The RSPCA, as a charity has no powers of entry, and would need police assistance with such an incident.

But the RSPCA has a 24-hour emergency cruelty line on **0300 1234 999**. This can be used to seek **advice only**.

3. The dog's showing signs of heatstroke, but the police can't attend

Many people's instinct would be to break the glass, but this could be classed as criminal damage.

However, the law states that you have a lawful reason to commit damage if you believe the owner of the property would consent if they knew the circumstances.

Remember to collect evidence, as if the owner can see their animal in distress, they may approve of your actions and you'll have a stronger defence.

Take photos and videos, and gather witnesses. But most importantly, inform the police of your intentions.

4. The dog's out of the car. What now?

Take the dog to a shaded area and douse them with cool (not cold) water, providing a small amount for the animal to drink. If the water is too cold, it may cause shock.

Continue to douse the dog with water until their breathing starts to settle. Then take it to a vet as a matter of urgency.