

For the HEALTH of It #2: Staying Cool in Hot Weather May 2023

by Georgia Edwards, MD

Summer's coming! Time for more shows, training, and traveling. And time to be aware of the dangers of having your dog in a car and practice summertime safety. You are your dog's best advocate to keep him safe, and not all dog trialing/training events take ambient heat into consideration – they proceed despite the temperature being unsafe for dogs and handlers. If it's too hot, chuck your entry fees and go cool off.

But here are some ways to keep cooler. Please note that the products mentioned here have been used successfully by Bouvier owners, but there are many others available.

Outside of your car, remember how hot the pavement can be. How can you tell if the pavement is too hot for your dog's paws? Press the back of your hand on the pavement surface for 7 seconds – if it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog. Plus that hot surface reflects heat onto your dog's belly and heats him further.



<u>Air Temperature</u>	<u>Pavement Temperature</u>
77°F	125°F
86°F	135°F
87°F	143°F

At 125*, skin destruction can occur in 60 seconds.

Inside of your car, a Waggle monitor is installed in your car to continuously monitor temperature and humidity. A phone app alerts you when the interior temperature or humidity is unsafe, or when the power in your RV goes off. (MyWaggle.com). Useful only where there is phone service.

Inside of your car, if you have a car with ongoing air conditioning while parked, you are half way to keeping your dog safe in the heat. Other ways to cool the inside of your parked car:

1. Windshield heat-reflective screens – foldable and removable (hard to store, sort-of fits, kind-of stays in place), or permanently-installed retract shades which folds against the passenger-side windshield pillar: Available from dashdesigns.com ~\$45





2. Vent-lock – locks your vehicle (via your car keys) side doors or rear hatch in an open position. Multiple lengths available from cleanrun.com ~\$30. The hook goes into the “catch” on the door or hatch of the car, the loop goes into the “fastener”. Works on most all cars – one exception is some models of the Prius.



3. Breezeguard Mutt Managers window screens – come in pairs for front or back windows, inserted into door inside the window, so that the window is operable; custom-made for each make/model/year of vehicle. Available through Breezeguard.com, \$375 for pair or Amazon.com. Sturdy & durable – I’ve had mine since 2011.



4.

5. Aluminet screening cloth – aluminum mesh fabric that reflects and reduces sun penetration to the vehicle. Available from many manufacturers. It is less expensive when purchased through a greenhouse supply company; and it requires magnets or tie-downs to keep it in place.

<http://www.greenhousemegastore.com>

Pre-made sizes with binding and grommets, 70%, Silver, Aluminet Shade Cloth also are available.

<https://www.cleanrun.com>

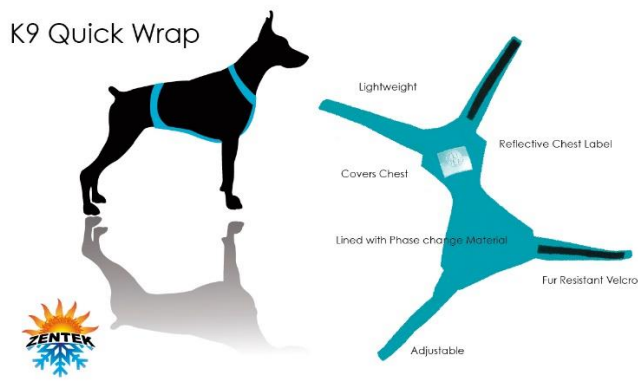
6. Fans – multiple portable models available that run off the car battery or their own battery, and they can hang from the crate door or the inside of the vehicle. The Ryobi models shown below will run on “high” for 3 hours with its 18V battery:



For your Dog: Cooling wraps/coats

Phase-change fabric developed by NASA, (cools dog in summer, keeps him warm in winter): Zentekclothing.com and Belly-wrap/Quick-wrap

K9 Quick Wrap



Zentek uses the latest cooling technology, to keep your dogs' temperature even.

Full body coat (this one in SAR colors) in phase-change material; the chest-to-belly strap with Velcro over the dog's back under the yellow flaps which are zippered on the underside to hold whatever:



Evaporative coats – fabric is soaked in water, then applied; cooling comes from evaporation – Lucolove coat on Oso:



Aluminet coats with evaporative cooling liner – ChillyBuddy cooling coat, PlanetBlueDog.com \$65

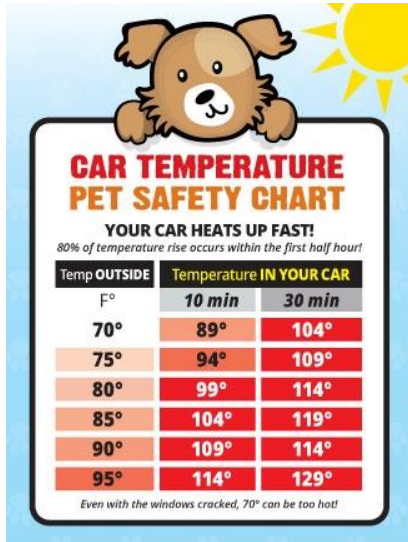


Booties are available to protect the feet – but frankly, if the pavement is hot enough for your dog to need booties, it is too hot to be outdoors with your dog.

Cooling beds/mats – soaked in water then cooling via evaporation; multiple styles, sizes, prices.

Elevated beds with ventilated fabric: Coolaroo is a well-known brand, indoor-outdoor use, available from Amazon.com - ~ \$40 for large (Bouvier) size.





Your best defense: **DON'T LEAVE YOUR DOG IN THE CAR ON HOT DAYS.** The temperature can rise rapidly to a deadly point within minutes.

If your dog has suspected heat stroke, move him to the shade and start cooling using cool (NOT cold) tap water and call your vet for further instructions.