NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 18, 2020

LEAVING ANIMALS UNATTENDED INSIDE VEHICLES DURING EXTREME TEMPERATURES IS AGAINST THE LAW

With triple digit temperatures set to hit the Valley this weekend, the Fresno County District Attorney's Office would like to remind the public of the potential consequences of leaving animals inside vehicles in extreme heat. Not only could the life of a beloved family pet be lost in minutes, but anyone caught leaving an animal unattended in their vehicle in such extreme temperatures could face animal cruelty charges.

Pursuant to California Penal Code 597(a), a person shall not leave or confine an animal in any unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal due to heat, cold, lack of adequate ventilation, or lack of food or water, or other circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause suffering, disability, or death to the animal.

If found guilty of animal abuse, convictions could result in jail or prison time. Additionally, convicted persons could incur various fines and fees, and be prohibited from owning, possessing, maintaining, residing with or caring for animals from 5 to 10 years.

The Central Valley is well-known for its high summer temperatures. In fact, when it's only 85 degrees outside, it takes just 10 minutes for the interior of a vehicle to reach 102 degrees and only 30 minutes to exceed 120 degrees. Once outside temperatures hit triple digits, vehicle interior temperatures only continue to rise, and such scorching heat will cause the helpless animal irreparable harm or death.

If you see an animal left in a vehicle, you're encouraged to immediately contact a local law enforcement agency, the fire department, or animal control. If you are near surrounding businesses, ask them to make an announcement requesting the owner return to their vehicle immediately.

The Media may email FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov or call 559.600.4442 with any questions.

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