

PROCEDURE 13

Heatwave, heat stress and HVAC failure

Purpose: Prevent heat illness by using predetermined weather, occupancy and equipment shutdown triggers.



SITE CUSTOMISATION REQUIRED. This national baseline must be adapted through a site risk assessment, worker consultation and advice from the relevant state or territory regulator, emergency services, council, insurer and veterinarian. Human life takes priority.

Business and site details

Business legal name		Trading name	
Site / branch		ABN	
Physical address		Emergency entry / cross street	
Site manager		Incident Controller	
Maximum dogs		Maximum people	
Operating hours		Main phone	

Document control

Issue date		Next review date	
Approved by		Position	

Activate this procedure when

- High temperature/humidity, heatwave warning, air-conditioning or ventilation failure, dryer fault, hot vehicle, distressed panting, weakness, collapse or multiple dogs seeking cool surfaces.

P Protect people	A Alert and activate	W Welfare and secure dogs	S Sign off accountability
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Step-by-step emergency response

- 1

Stop heat-generating activity. End exercise, outdoor play, drying and transport. Move dogs to shade or a cool, ventilated area and provide access to water where safe.
- 2

Reduce occupancy or relocate. Apply the site's temperature/HVAC trigger. Contact owners, deploy backup cooling and transfer dogs before conditions become unsafe.
- 3

Triage. Treat suspected heat illness as urgent. Start cooling within current dog first-aid training and contact a veterinarian immediately; transport without stopping safe cooling.
- 4

Protect people. Rotate staff, provide water/rest/cooling and use human heat-illness procedures; call 000 for altered consciousness or suspected heatstroke.
- 5

Monitor and record. Record room/vehicle temperature, humidity where available, affected dogs, cooling actions and equipment status at frequent intervals.

Do not

STOP	Leave a dog in a stationary vehicle or failed-HVAC room.
STOP	Use an unattended heated dryer or enclosure without operational temperature/airflow safeguards.
STOP	Delay veterinary advice because a dog appears to improve after initial cooling.

After the immediate danger

- Quarantine faulty equipment and arrange competent repair.
- Review weather thresholds, shade, airflow, water redundancy, generator safety and staffing.
- Use a lower threshold for brachycephalic, obese, elderly, very young, heavily coated or medically compromised dogs.

Assigned emergency roles

Incident Controller	Selects the safe action, liaises with emergency services and authorises recovery.	
People / Area Warden	Protects people, sweeps assigned areas if safe and reports status.	
Dog Movement / Canine FA	Secures, identifies, separates, triages and moves dogs within training.	
Communications / Recorder	Calls services and owners, maintains the time log and preserves records.	



Procedure readiness checklist

- ☐ Set documented temperature, humidity, occupancy and HVAC triggers for reduced activity or relocation.
- ☐ Provide shade, potable water, airflow and temperature monitoring in every occupied dog area and vehicle.
- ☐ Maintain portable cooling equipment and safe backup power for ventilation.
- ☐ Identify brachycephalic, obese, elderly, very young, heavily coated and medically compromised dogs.
- ☐ Service HVAC, alarms, dryers and vehicle ventilation and record breakdown response times.
- ☐ Train staff in human and canine heat-illness recognition, first aid and urgent veterinary escalation.

Site-specific arrangements

Heat / HVAC shutdown trigger	
Temperature monitoring points	
Backup cooling / power	
Vulnerable dog register	

Emergency contacts and notifications

Emergency veterinarian		Triple Zero for human heat illness	
Owners, technician and manager		Primary / emergency vet	

Recommended drill: Detect a simulated HVAC failure, reduce activity, deploy cooling and relocate before the threshold is exceeded.

Drill, review and authorisation record

Last drill date		Participants	
Corrective action owner		Action due date	
Procedure authorised by		Authorisation date	
Gaps identified / corrective actions			

Sources and further guidance

[3] [Safe Work Australia - First aid](#)
[8] [Bureau of Meteorology - Warnings and alerts](#)
[10] [Queensland Government - Prepare pets for disasters](#)
[21] [Agriculture Victoria - Boarding establishments code](#)

Review date: source links and national emergency numbers were checked for the master manual on 31 August 2026. Confirm local numbers, warnings, laws, codes, licences and veterinary arrangements before issue and at every review.

