



SUMMER NOTICE

Hello pet families! As summer approaches, I wanted to take a minute to review our summer policies. I understand that this may be your first summer with us, so please reach out to me if you have questions or would like to discuss these changes.

Here in Virginia, we have four different types of temperatures we have to take into consideration, especially when we walk our pets.

The first is air temperature. This is what is usually reported through our weather apps and details the reading of a thermometer in the shade (not sun) to describe what the air feels like outside.

In Virginia we also have humidity, which is where the Heat Index or apparent temperature (humidity + air temp) comes from. For my older dogs, this is a big deal. Humidity can exaggerate respiratory conditions (they are more prone to asthma & chronic bronchitis). They are also more susceptible to dehydration and take longer to bounce back from heat exposure.

Another is surface temperature (the temp of an object/thing). This is a very important measurement that most people forget to take before they walk their dogs. Most roads have asphalt, which can read more than 120° by as early as 12pm on a summer day. We humans wear shoes so we never notice, but I assure you that your pup does. A paw pad exposed to this for just 60 seconds can cause blisters.

Lastly is radiant temperature; the measurement of heat reflecting off a surface, or diverging from an object. Dogs are lower to the ground so the radiant temperatures are higher for them. Some also have trouble dissipating heat from their bodies (this varies by the dogs coat/fur type) which can cause them to overheat and dehydrate faster. Dark colored fur absorbs sunlight which can cause your dog to overheat, leading to dehydration and heat related illnesses. Please don't forget there is the sun exposure itself- sunburn can occur on dogs without enough coat/fur to protect their skin. And don't forget their ears! (Thank goodness they make dog sunscreen!)

By now your probably wondering why the science lesson, right? Well, because we care about your pets and want to keep them safe. In order to do that, we change the way we do business and put strict rules in place. So let's go over them.

#1- All walks/visits will be a MAX of 30 minutes effective June 1 (subject to change based on weather). Some walks may be split into a shorter walk with playtime or

lovins afterwards. We will base the walk on what your DOG wants; if they are too hot or uncomfortable then we will go back inside after they have done their business. 30 minutes will still be provided to your pet.

#2- All walks/visits will take place before 1pm. If you are currently slated in a late afternoon time slot, I will work with you to reschedule your pup into a different window that works for us both. If we cannot move your window due to your work schedule, we will walk where it is safe and add in yard time.

#3- Surface temps will be taken BEFORE we step into your home to ensure it is safe for your pup to go out, especially for my neighborhoods that do not have sidewalks. If the surface temps are above levels we are uncomfortable with, your pup will not walk and will instead be provided yard time. The ONLY exception we will make is if your dog(s) have shoes and will wear them.

One last thing- I want all my pet parents to be as educated as possible, so below are important details to familiarize yourself with if you spent a lot of time outside with your pup.

*Use a bare foot or your hand to test surface temperatures like the street, sidewalk, driveway, etc. Grass usually will not get hot but turf, stone and dirt will. If it's too hot for you, it's too hot for them.

*A dog's normal resting temperature ranges from 99-102.5.

*Body Temp of 104 is Heat Stress. Symptoms include seeking shade, limited movement, restlessness, uncontrolled panting, nausea, vomiting, reddening skin, and excessive saliva.

* Body Temp of 105 is Heat Exhaustion. Symptoms include excessive panting, difficulty breathing, excessive drooling, fever, muscle tremors, lethargy, vomiting, dizziness, diarrhea, and rapid pulse.

If you experience these in your dog, COOL water 'in and out' (drink and hose them down or use ice packs in armpits & chest), move to a shaded area and/or put in front of a fan, monitor for body temp to return to normal range. Consider a cooling mat, sunscreen or dog bed with a sun canopy for constant exposure to heat.

*Body Temp of 106+ is Heat Stroke. Symptoms include confusion, excessive drooling with thickening saliva, gums are bright red/blue/purple, dizziness, rectal bleeding, refusal to drink water, lethargic, lose of consciousness or has a seizure. Seek medical attention immediately.