

Summer can spell disaster for dogs, children left in cars

Local law enforcement says think twice about it

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — The days are long, the pools are open, and temperature predictions are showing highs in the 90s this week. While summertime is a relaxing season for many, it's also a potentially dangerous time for dogs and children left in cars at the mercy of their guardians.

"We haven't taken that many calls this year," Lt. Charles Byram of the Pendleton Police Department said. "The weather is a little milder."

But, Byram said, the calls do happen. Usually in parking lots outside stores like Safeway or Walmart.

Last month in Medford, a man received a felony charge for animal abuse after falling asleep in his home and leaving his dog unattended in a car. The 4-year-old Miniature Pinscher did not survive the incident.

While it might not seem like a big deal to leave a furry companion or a child in the car for a few minutes, the thermometer begs to differ. Temperate 80-degree weather can cause a car to heat up to 99 degrees in 10 minutes, according to the Humane Society.



Blaze, a 7-year-old lab mix, drinks from a bucket at Pendleton Animal Welfare Shelter (PAWS). Blaze has been at the shelter since June 5, 2019, after being impounded as a stray dog by Pendleton Police Department.

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Byram said within an hour, the temperature in a car could rise 30 to 50 degrees from the outside temperature.

"You're putting them at risk for heat stroke and pos-

sibly death," said Umatilla County Public Health deputy director Alisha Southwick. "Rolling down the window is not enough. It doesn't help."

Hermiston Police

Department Chief Jason Edmiston said that in Hermiston, calls about animals in cars increase in the summer.

This year, the department has handled nearly

300 dog-related calls but that it's hard to say how many of those calls were caused by owners leaving pets in cars.

He said the department prefers to have police offi-

cers, rather than code enforcement, handle these calls.

In 2017, it became legal in Oregon to break into a motor vehicle to rescue a child or domestic animal.

Anyone who does so is required to stay at the scene until law enforcement arrives. But it must first be determined that the vehicle is locked, and that there is no way for the child or animal to escape the vehicle. It must also be determined that entry is necessary because the subject is in imminent harm.

But what does imminent harm look like?

Dogs suffering from heat stroke can be found panting more than usual, drooling and acting drowsy, and possibly even vomiting, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They might have gums and tongues that look redder than normal, too.

Byram said if someone spots an animal, or a child, in a parked car who looks to be in danger, it might be better to call the police department before taking action, if time allows it.

"We're there in a matter of minutes," he said.

Driving away from risk of vehicle fires

Recent vehicle fires serve as a reminder to keep cars cool and safe from the flames

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded to a call Tuesday for a parked vehicle on fire at 5:02 p.m. near the intersection of North Ott and West Walls Road. The cause is still under investigation.

The fire spread to surrounding grass and brush, and the vehicle was fully engulfed in flames when UCFD1 arrived five minutes later. No one was injured, but the vehicle was a total loss.

In the region, with the summer being dry, there is an increased amount of fuel — grass and brush — at risk of catching alight, said Lt. Matt Hodge of UCFD1.

"If someone pulls over to take a phone call, (they should) have a good awareness of where they're parking vehicles," Hodge said.

The National Fire Protection Association released data showing that between 2007 and 2011, U.S. fire departments responded to

almost 230,000 vehicle fires per year. The fires are said to have caused over 1,400 civilian injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage every one of those years.

Last Thursday, the Pendleton Fire Department responded to a Ford Ranger truck that broke into flames outside an auto shop on South West Court Avenue.

Aside from mindful parking, there are other steps people can take to reduce the risk of their cars going up in flames, and potentially threatening nearby people and structures.

"Most fires are due to the vehicles not being maintained," said Shawn Penninger, Pendleton assistant fire chief and fire marshal.

Penninger said many vehicle fires in Pendleton involve semitrucks.

Oil leaks, faulty exhaust components and worn-down brake cables can all pose a potential danger, both Penninger and Hodge said.

It's also important, Penninger said, to keep your car out of the garage and away from houses if it appears to be overheating.

"My first recommendation," Penninger said, "would be to have your vehicle maintained according to the manual."

Police catch Hermiston man who taunted them on Facebook

Aaren Anthey Rivera Barrera arrested on a warrant for felony parole violation

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A Hermiston man's gloating on Facebook over escaping arrest was short-lived.

Aaren Anthey Rivera Barrera, 27, was arrested Tuesday in the Hermiston Walmart parking lot on a warrant for felony parole violation. He is being held in Umatilla County Jail without bail.

Barrera ran and successfully hid from Hermiston Police Department officers last Friday when they attempted to serve the arrest warrant. He celebrated by bragging on Whats Happening Herm-

iston, a popular community Facebook page.

Calling out Officer Mike Ellwood "and his lil' goons" in a profanity-laced post, he wrote "YOU COULDN'T CATCH ME TODAY EVEN WHEN YOU HAD AN ARMY WITH YOU TIME TO PLAY MARCO POLO."

Many of the commenters on the post, which has since been deleted, expressed their hope that police would find Barrera soon. On Tuesday they got their wish, as an officer spotted Barrera in a Mercedes-Benz driven by Austin Leroy James, who was also wanted on a misdemeanor failure to appear warrant, in the Walmart parking lot. Both men were arrested and lodged at the jail.

The police department celebrated with a Face-

book post of their own, showing a picture of Barrera in the back of a patrol car with the hashtag #POLO.

"Enjoy your stay and the accommodations with our good friends and fellow goons at the Umatilla County Jail," Capt. Travis Eynon wrote.

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