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NEWS RELEASE

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**DA's Office Reminds Pet Owners It's A Crime To
Leave Pets in Vehicles During Hot Weather**

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is reminding pet owners that it's against the law to leave their animals in their vehicles during the dog days of summer.

Even on days when temperatures outside are in the low 70s and the windows are left slightly open, a vehicle can heat up by an average of 40 degrees within an hour. A healthy dog can withstand a body temperature of 107 to 108 degrees for a short time before possibly being severely injured or die.

Those who leave their pets unattended in cars can be charged with misdemeanor animal endangerment and face up to six months in jail. If the animal dies, the owner could be charged with felony animal cruelty and face up to three years in state prison.

"Leave your pet at home on warm days unless you're positive you'll be able to take them in with you wherever you're going," said Deputy District Attorney Deborah Knaan, Animal Cruelty Case Coordinator. "Even a few minutes in a hot car is too long. The decision to leave your pet in a car could end badly for both you and your pet. In short: Don't do it."

Prosecutors recently filed two cases where dogs were left behind in a car.

Last month, Lydia Ann Meyers (dob 4/28/54) was charged with two misdemeanor counts of cruelty to an animal in case 4JB03510. She is accused of leaving two dogs locked inside a car without water for more than 25 minutes in Covina on April 7.

Johnny Shao Tien (dob 9/3/78) pleaded not guilty last week to one misdemeanor count of failure to care for an animal and animal endangerment, an infraction, in case 4JB04310. In May, a dog was found in a vehicle in Rowland Heights. The windows were cracked a couple of inches but authorities estimate it was at least 100 degrees inside the car.

In both cases, the dogs survived. The cases were investigated by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control and the Sheriff's Department.

The District Attorney's Office offers eye-catching posters and cards reminding people of the dangers – and illegality – of leaving animals unattended in hot vehicles. For more information, call (213) 974-3716 or to download free material click on the following links:

http://da.lacounty.gov/pdf/dog_eng_11x16.pdf

http://da.lacounty.gov/pdf/dog_span_11x16.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions About Leaving Pets in Hot Vehicles:

1) What are some signs a pet is in distress?

Heavy panting, thick saliva, lethargy, restlessness, excessive thirst, lack of coordination.

2) If you see a pet in a vehicle what should you do?

If the animal is not in distress, have someone keep watch over it while you try and locate the owner. If that's not possible, contact local law enforcement. If the pet is in distress, you should immediately call 911.

3) Is it a crime to leave a pet in a vehicle?

Yes. Leaving an animal unattended can be charged as an infraction or as a misdemeanor. If a pet dies, the owner could be charged with felony animal cruelty, which carries a maximum three-year prison term.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.