

Lifeline K9's Hot Weather Policy for Assistance Dogs

The safety and well-being of assistance dogs during hot weather is a top priority. High temperatures can pose serious health risks, including heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Handlers must take all necessary precautions to ensure their dog remains safe and comfortable in warm conditions.

General Guidelines

- Dogs must always have access to fresh water and be given frequent opportunities to drink.
- Handlers must plan training and working hours around the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.
- Dogs should be given plenty of rest breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas when working in warm weather.
- If walking on pavement or other surfaces, handlers should check the ground temperature by placing their hand on it for a few seconds—if it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog's paws.

Protective Measures

- Dogs may wear cooling vests, dampened coats, or bandanas to help regulate body temperature.
- Paw protection (such as boots or paw wax) should be used if working on hot surfaces.
- Handlers must be aware of signs of heat stress, including excessive panting, drooling, lethargy, or difficulty walking. If any of these occur, the dog must be removed from work immediately and cooled down gradually.

Restrictions on Activity

- Assistance dogs must not be worked in extreme heat where their welfare may be compromised.
- If temperatures are dangerously high, handlers should avoid outdoor work and instead focus on indoor training or rest.

If a dog shows signs of heatstroke (collapse, vomiting, confusion, or seizures) they must be taken to the vets immediately, make sure to call while you are on your way.

Handlers must always prioritise their dog's wellbeing in hot weather. Failure to follow this policy and putting a dog at risk may result in removal from the program.