



RAD Hot Weather Policy





At RAD the welfare of our dogs is paramount to us, especially when working during the summer months. The type of breed your dog is makes a huge difference to its ability to work safely in hotter conditions. At RAD we have set maximum and minimum temperatures of different type of breeds.

- **Brachycephalic breeds*** (flat faced dogs)– Max working temperature of **18 degrees in London/cities** and **20 degrees elsewhere**. These dog breeds find it harder to cool down and their risk of developing heat stroke is higher. These types of dogs can develop heat stroke faster than other breeds.
- **Mesocephalic**** (medium sized skull) and **dolichocephalic breeds***** (long faced) – Max working temperature **22 degrees in London/cities** and **25 degrees else where** in the country.
- **Thick Fur** (Breeds with a thick double coat and dense undercoat) Max working temperature **18 degrees in London/cities** and **20 degrees elsewhere**. Breeds with coats designed to protect them in environments where temperatures are often minus degrees and have snow fall struggle to cool themselves in the hot weather and are at an increased risk of heat stroke.
- **Giant Breeds-** Max working temperature **20 degrees in London/cities** and **22 degrees elsewhere**. Giant breed dogs are more likely to get heatstroke than smaller dogs because larger bodies tend to lose body heat more slowly
- **Senior dogs** (this is breed dependent, see table below) Max working temperature **20 degrees in London/cities** and **22 degrees elsewhere**.

Dog Size	Senior Age
Small breed (< than 10kg or standing height 12" <)	10–12 years old
Medium breed (11kg - 26 kg)	8–10 years old
Large breed (27kg- 45kg)	8–9 years old
Giant breed (> 45kg or standing height 26" >)	6–7 years old



HOT WEATHER RISK MATRIX

	 Small	 Medium	 Large	Key	Other Factors
15	1	1	1	1- No evidence of risk	+ 1 Brachy
18	1	1	2	2- Risk is unlikely	+1 Northern breeds or heavy coats
21	2	2	3	3- Unsafe potential- Depending on breed	+1 senior dog or under 6 months of age
23	3	3	3	4- Dangerous weather developing	- 1 If in air-conditioning
26	3	3	4	5- Potentially life threatening heat.	
29	4	4	5		
32	5	5	5		



Special Circumstances

There may be times when you need to attend an appointment when it is very hot. Your dog will need to walk from the car to inside. In this scenario the RAD dog should not be vested, should be wearing a cooling vest or bandana and should be wearing boots to protect feet.

- **Brachycephalic breeds** – max working temperature is **22 degrees**.
- **Mesocephalic** and **dolichocephalic** breeds the max working temperature is **27 degrees**.

Humidity

When humidity is high, it increases the '*feels like*' temperature. This can cause the temperature to feel anything from 1 to 6 degrees hotter than the weather forecast temperature.

Dogs cool themselves by panting, when they pant moisture from their lungs evaporates to help reduce the body temperature. Often when the humidity is high, you will notice your dog panting more as they try to cool themselves down. It hard for them to do this with a high humidity because the moisture from their lungs does not evaporate as quickly.

When humidity is high, it can have a negative impact on a dog's ability to cool themselves through panting, meaning their body temperature can significantly increase to a potentially life-threatening level.

Dogs also struggle in the 'muggy' weather. The warm moisture in the air means they cannot cool themselves efficiently and are again at risk of heat stroke.

This chart below shows the '*feels like*' temperature (degrees) when humidity is taken into account. Humidity % can be found on most weather apps. **Green** – ok to work. **Yellow** – consideration needed when working (shady areas, air conditioning) **Red** – work in line with special circumstances on the first page.

Degrees-Humidity	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
0	14	14	16	17	18	19	20	21
5	14	14.5	16	17	18	19	20	21
10	14.5	15	17	18	19	20	21	22
15	15	15	17	18	19	20	21	22
20	15	15.5	17	18	20	20	22	23
25	15.5	16	18	19	20	21	22	23
30	16	16.5	18	19	21	21	22	24
35	16.5	16.5	19	20	21	22	23	24
40	16.5	17	19	20	21	22	23	24
45	17	17.5	19	21	22	23	23	25
50	17.5	18	20	21	22	23	24	25
55	17.5	18	20	22	23	23	24	25
60	18	18.5	21	22	23	24	25	26
65	18.5	19	21	22	24	24	25	26
70	19	20	22	23	25	25	26	27
75	19	20	22	23	25	25	26	27
80	19.5	20	22	24	25	26	27	28
85	20	20.5	23	24	26	26	27	28
90	20	21	23	25	26	27	28	29
95	20.5	21.5	23	25	26	27	28	29
100	21	21.5	24	25	27	28	29	30

Please take your dog's breed into account when deciding on whether you should take your dog with you. Bernese mountain dogs, huskies, Newfoundlands for example were bred for colder climates and will naturally struggle in hot temperature. Those with a double coat will also find the heat more difficult, eg Golden Retrievers.

*<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/brachycephalic>

<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/news/news-articles/2020/06/flat-faced-dogs-such-as-bulldogs,-french-bulldogs-and-pugs-most-at-risk-of-heat-stroke,-study-shows>

**beagles, golden retrievers, German shepherds, Labradors, spaniels

***greyhounds, collies, setters, dachshunds, great Danes, Italian greyhounds

Keeping cool in the heat

While many of us enjoy being out in the sun, it is important we take into consideration our dogs. Unlike humans, dogs cannot sweat through their skin to cool down, they rely on releasing heat through their paw pads, nose and by panting. Dogs can suffer from heatstroke within minutes.

How to keep your dog cool

When the weather is hot we need to take into consideration the times of day we work them and for how long. You should take your dog's breed into consideration also, some breeds cope with the heat better than others for example Huskies are bred to cope with minus temperatures and so will struggle in hot weather more than a dog with a short coat.

- Make sure your dog has access to water. You can buy travel bottles for dogs that you can take out with you and collapsible bowls
- On hot days take your dog out during cooler parts of the days.
- Using cool mats in the house or garden can and paddling pools can help dogs cool down at home.
- If you need to go out when it is hot to ensure the dog's feet are protected, we also recommend a cool jacket. This should be for unavoidable scenarios like hospital appointments and the dog only being walking a short duration in the heat. Walk in the shade as much as possible.
- Make frozen treats such as kongs, frozen carrots or dog ice creams.
- You need to be especially careful with short nose breeds such as bull breeds and boxers. Also be extra careful with old dogs and puppies.
- Be careful letting your dog swim- while this can be a great way for dogs to cool down and have fun we need to consider strong currents, algae and bacteria in the water.



YOU SHOULD NEVER LEAVE YOUR DOG UNATTENDED IN A CAR ON A HOT DAY. Even if the car is parked in the shade and the windows open, the dog can still become distressed and suffer from heatstroke.

Heatstroke

What is heatstroke?

Heatstroke is a potentially fatal condition brought on when the dog gets too hot, the dogs normal body temperature is between 38-39°C (100.4-102.2°F), if their temperature going above 40°C then they are at risk of heatstroke. Heatstroke is an extremely dangerous condition. It can cause seizures, organ failure, internal bleeding, coma and worst of all death.

The quicker you get the dog to the vets and cooled down the better their chances of recovery are.

Causes

Around three quarters of heatstroke cases occur from dogs playing or being exercised in hot weather, as dogs cannot sweat to cool down, it can also be caused by sitting somewhere warm such as a conservatory, car or a warm room with no ventilation.

Any dog can develop heatstroke, but flat-faced, overweight, giant-breed, thick-coated, very old and very young dogs are most at risk.

