

Water Safety Tips for Dogs

- **Not all dogs are good swimmers:** And even if they are, if they fall overboard, they can get into trouble from exhaustion or hypothermia. Spend time getting to know how strong a swimmer your dog is and see him in practice before hitting the open water! To practice, support your pet's midsection until he feels comfortable propelling himself.
- **Consider a flotation device:** If you don't have a flotation device for your dog, it is extra important to have family members who are playing with the dog wearing their flotation devices; in case they try to help their pet and get into trouble themselves. In a boat, a dog should always wear a lifejacket. The dangers are the same as for humans: Fast currents can carry your pet away quickly; the distance to shore may be further than estimated, or in a different direction than estimated. Hypothermia, muscle cramps and fatigue can set in. Also, if dogs jump from a high speed boat, they can be injured by hitting the water hard.



- **Water play:** Stay away from sticks and instead use a ball. Sticks have sharp ends, and serious injury has occurred from dogs pouncing on the sharp end of a stick. Remove the collar before your dog goes into the water, especially the chain or slip ones, because they can snag your pet on hidden underwater branches, plants etc.
- **Monitor for heat stroke:** Though it is impossible to keep your pet from drinking the pool or lake water, providing a fresh water source may help! Also, monitor your pet for signs of dehydration and heat stroke, and keep him off hot sand as it can blister paws.
- **After swim:** Some dogs are sensitive to skin rashes and swimmer's ear. As soon as possible after a swim, rinse your dog off with clean fresh water. Clean ears with an ear cleanser specifically formulated for dogs and dry the ears thoroughly. If you know your dog has sensitive skin, also bathe your dog with dog shampoo to get all the chemicals, bacteria and other contaminants off the skin.