



Hot Weather Policy

Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the health hazards posed to dogs by high temperatures. Walk-Ci's aim is to prevent heat-related illnesses, dehydration and other adverse effects by implementing control measures (Hall *et al.*, 2021 and Moon *et al.*, 2021).

General principles

- Walk-Ci's is committed to ensuring dogs are exercised safely and responsibly
- Walks may be modified, shortened, rescheduled, exchanged for welfare checks, or cancelled where weather conditions present a risk to their welfare.
- The safety and wellbeing of the dog will always take priority over maintaining a scheduled walk.

Temperature Guidelines and Control Measures

Below 20°C

- Normal walking routines may continue.
- Dogs must have access to fresh drinking water.

20°C–24°C

- Walks should be shortened where appropriate.
- Avoid strenuous exercise.
- Seek shaded routes and grassy areas.
- Carry water for dogs during walks.

25°C+

- Walks should be scheduled during cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.
- High-energy exercise and prolonged exposure to direct sunlight must be avoided.
- Pavement temperature checks must be carried out before walking.
- Outdoor walks may be cancelled or replaced with indoor enrichment activities or brief toilet breaks only.
- Dogs must not be exercised on hot pavements or artificial surfaces.
- These control measures are subject to environmental factors, if breezy, overcast etc may not need to be put in place.

Pavement Safety

Before any walk, walkers must assess ground temperatures using the “5-second rule”:

- If the back of the hand cannot comfortably remain on the pavement for 5 seconds, it is too hot for a dog to walk on safely.

Whenever possible, dogs should be walked on:

- Grass
- Dirt paths
- Woodland trails
- Shaded routes

High-Risk Dogs

Extra precautions must be taken for dogs more vulnerable to heat-related illness, including: (Hall *et al.*, 2021)

- Flat-faced breeds (e.g. Bulldogs, Pugs)
- Elderly dogs
- Puppies
- Overweight dogs
- Dogs with medical conditions
- Thick-coated breeds
- (Hall *et al.*, 2020, Hall *et al.*, 2021)

These dogs may require reduced exercise or cancellation of walks at lower temperatures.

Signs of Heat Stress (Hall *et al.*, 2021)

Figure 1: Grades of progression for heat-related illness in dogs



If heat stress is suspected:

1. Move the dog to a cool shaded area immediately.
2. Offer cool (not ice-cold) water.
3. Wet the dog gradually with cool water.
4. Contact the owner and seek veterinary advice immediately.

Owner Communication

Owners will be informed when walks are:

- Shortened
- Rescheduled
- Modified
- Cancelled due to heat conditions

The organisation reserves the right to make welfare-based decisions regarding safe exercise conditions.

By making a booking with Walk-Ci's, clients confirm that they understand and agree to these terms.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by Walk-Ci's to ensure that it remains appropriate for the safety of the animals in our care.

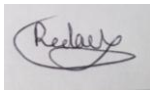
The policy may also be reviewed and updated when there are significant changes to services, business practices, legal requirements or circumstances that may affect its content.

Any significant changes to the policy will be communicated to clients where appropriate.

Date: 21/08/2026

Review Date: 21/08/2027

Signature:



Rosalin Day, MSc, BSc

Walk-Ci's CEO

References

- Hall, E.J., Carter, A.J. and O'Neill, D.G. (2020) 'Dogs don't die just in hot cars—Exertional heat-related illness (heatstroke) is a greater threat to UK dogs', *Animals*, 10(8), p. 1324. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10081324>
- Moon, K.E., Wang, S., Bryant, K. and Gohlke, J.M. (2021) 'Environmental heat exposure among pet dogs in rural and urban settings in the southern United States', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 8, p. 742926. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2021.742926>
- Hall, E.J., Carter, A.J. and O'Neill, D.G. (2021) 'Incidence and risk factors for heat-related illness (heatstroke) in UK dogs under primary veterinary care in 2016', *Animals*, 11(11), p. 3302. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11113302>
- Hall, E.J., Carter, A.J. and O'Neill, D.G. (2021) *Health matters: Hot dogs*. *Kennel Gazette*. Available at: https://heatstroke.dog/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/health-matters-hot-dogs_hall_carter_oneill_-may-2021-kennel-gazettefinal.pdf (Accessed: 26 May 2026).
- KC Insurance (n.d.) *When is it too hot to walk your dog?* Available at: <https://www.kcinsurance.co.uk/guides-and-advice/when-is-it-too-hot-to-walk-your-dog/> (Accessed: 26 May 2026).