
Request for Amendment of Animal Ordinances for outdoor Animal and extreme heat

1 message

Summer H <[REDACTED]>
To: publiccomments@sgcityutah.gov

Tue, Aug 11, 2026 at 6:45 PM

Mayor and Members of the St. George City Council,

I am writing as a concerned resident to respectfully request that the City of St. George review and strengthen its animal welfare ordinances to provide clearer protections for dogs and other companion animals exposed to extreme heat.

While current city ordinances and Utah animal cruelty laws require adequate care, shelter, and humane treatment, they do not establish objective temperature-based standards for outdoor confinement or specific protections for animals whose breed, age, or health condition may make them especially vulnerable to heat-related illness.

Given Southern Utah's climate, where summer temperatures frequently exceed 100°F, the absence of clear standards can make enforcement difficult and may leave animals at risk of preventable heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death. Access to shade and water alone may not provide sufficient protection during periods of extreme heat.

I respectfully request that the Council consider adopting an ordinance that:

- Defines excessive heat conditions for companion animals.
- Establishes minimum shelter, shade, hydration, and cooling requirements.
- Limits prolonged outdoor confinement during dangerous temperatures.
- Provides Animal Control officers with objective enforcement standards.
- Educates pet owners about heat stress and animal safety.

I would like to propose consideration of language substantially similar to the following:

Proposed Ordinance Amendment

Section X: Protection of Companion Animals During Extreme Heat

A. No person shall leave, confine, or maintain a companion animal outdoors on a balcony, patio, kennel, enclosure, or tethered area when;

- The animal's breed, age, health condition, or current physical state makes the animal especially vulnerable, based on professional standards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) or the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).
- The heat index exceeds 80°F, or the ambient air temperature exceeds 85°F.

B. Animals shall not remain outdoors for more than one hour during such conditions unless they have continuous access to:

- Drinking water maintained at a temperature that provides a cooling benefit and does not exceed 80°F.
- Shade sufficient to protect the entire animal from direct sunlight and radiant heat throughout daylight hours.
- Adequately ventilated shelter.
- Ground surfaces that do not present a risk of heat injury, such as overheated concrete or metal.

C. Any owner or custodian who knowingly fails to provide the protections required by this section shall be subject to civil penalties and other enforcement remedies authorized by law.

Rationale

A clearly defined standard would:

- Improve consistency in enforcement.
- Reduce ambiguity for pet owners.
- Better protect animals from heat-related illness and death.
- Support Animal Control personnel by providing objective criteria for intervention.
- Reflect the realities of St. George's desert climate.

As Ordinance No. 2024-003 states that the City of St. George seeks to ensure the healthy and humane treatment of domestic pets, I am hopeful that this proposal will be thoughtfully reviewed and that additional protections will be considered to further safeguard companion animals throughout our community.

Animal stewardship is a shared responsibility. The way a community treats animals reflects its commitment to compassion, responsibility, and humane values.

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Mahatma Gandhi

I appreciate the Council's consideration of this proposal and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue during a public meeting or work session.

Thank you for your service to our community and for your commitment to the humane treatment of animals.

Respectfully,

Summer Hildreth

