
Subject: Request for Amendment to St. George Animal Welfare Ordinance Establishing Heat Protection Standards for Outdoor Animals

1 message

Summer Hildreth <summer@rrci.org>

Mon, Aug 17, 2026 at 10:24 AM

To: "publiccomments@sgcityutah.gov" <publiccomments@sgcityutah.gov>

Subject: Request for Amendment to St. George Animal Welfare Ordinance Establishing Heat Protection Standards for Outdoor Animals

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 amend its animal welfare ordinances to provide clearer protections for dogs and other companion animals that are left outside during periods of extreme heat.

Currently, St. George animal ordinances and Utah animal cruelty laws require that animals be provided with adequate care, shelter, and humane treatment; however, they do not establish objective temperature-based standards for when an animal may safely remain outdoors, nor do they specify necessary standards for vulnerable breeds, age, or health of the animal..

[\[stgeorgela.gov\]](http://stgeorgela.gov), [\[law.justia.com\]](http://law.justia.com)

Given the unique climate of Southern Utah, where summer temperatures frequently exceed 100°F, the absence of a clear heat standard can make enforcement difficult and may leave animals vulnerable to preventable heat-related injuries and death. Even when animals are left with a portion of shade and water that warms with the temperature, there are still several additional factors that still contribute to questionable safety measures for animals left outdoors in extreme temperatures.

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

1. Defines excessive heat conditions and temperatures for companion animals.
2. Establishes specific minimum shelter and cooling requirements.
3. Prohibits prolonged outdoor confinement during dangerous temperatures.
4. Provides Animal Control with objective enforcement standards.
5. Educates pet owners regarding heat stress and animal safety.

I 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 breed, age and health condition or current state of the animal classify or render it vulnerable, based on professional standards established by the American Veterinary Medical Association(MVMA), or the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).
- The heat index exceeds 80°F or the ambient air temperature exceeds 85°F;
- And that the animal under NO circumstances remains outdoors for more than ONE hour or during peak conditions, unless the animal has continuous access to:
 1. Drinking water which does not exceed the ambient air temperature of 80°F. Thereby providing a safe and cooling effect below the animals body temperature whereby heat transfers away from the body via conduction and evaporation.
 2. Shade sufficient to protect the entire animal from all radiant heat and direct sun exposure throughout daylight hours;
 3. An adequately ventilated shelter;
 4. A surface that does not present a risk of heat injury, such as metal or concrete;

B.. An 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 exhaustion, heat stroke, and death.
- Support Animal Control personnel by providing objective criteria for intervention.
- Reflect the realities of St. George's desert climate and the meaning of a heat index in comparison to and with ambient air temperature.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-003 opens with the statement that the City of St. George, desires to adopt an ordinance to further assure the healthy and humane treatment and care of domestic pets within St. George. I am hopeful that this letter and the proposal I am requesting will be thoughtfully reviewed and given specific regulations to more fully protect and preserve the animals of Southern Utah. Animal Stewardship is all of humanity's duty to protect, respect, and care for creatures.

Powerful reflections on ethical responsibility come from leaders and individuals who view animal welfare as a true measure of human character, morals and ability to show empathy.

"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 the 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

