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**SASK
SPCA**

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Update on Animal Rescue Standards

In January, the updated *Saskatchewan Animal Rescue Standards* were submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture for consideration. We have requested that these standards be referenced in *The Animal Protection Regulations*.

Currently the Regulations include a number of standards of practice, codes, and guidelines relating to kennels, catteries, and sled dogs, but there is nothing specific for pet rescues.

The Saskatchewan Animal Rescue Standards help fill this gap. These voluntary standards are relevant for all types of animal rescues, whether new or established. The standards are based on the work of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and the ASPCA.

The standards provide guidance on population management, medical health, recordkeeping, and other areas important to the operation of pet rescues.

The Saskatchewan Animal Rescue Standards were developed by a volunteer Working Group with representation from veterinarians and veterinary technologists, SPCAs/Humane Societies, and pet rescues.

You can read the standards at petrescuetoolkit.ca. The standards are part of the new Pet Rescue Toolkit, a free educational resource for both pet rescues and new pet owners.

The SaskSPCA thanks everyone who has provided feedback on the standards, with a special thank you to all the Working Group members who have freely given their time and expertise in the development of the standards.



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Stryker K-9 Care Fund: Getting to know Daxa

Police Service Dog (PSD) Daxa is a German Shepherd who served with the Prince Albert Police Service (PAPS) for five years. Daxa retired from the PAPS in 2018.

During her career, Daxa participated in the 2017 Canadian Police Canine Association K-9 Trials where she took first place in the tracking profile competition. Also in 2017, Daxa received the St. John Life Saving Award for assisting the RCMP in locating a missing person in frigid temperatures, along with the RCMP Commendation Award for, "going above and beyond on the call". In 2018, Daxa was voted "Best Police Officer" in Prince Albert's Best of the Best Awards.

During her five years on duty, Daxa was responsible for the apprehension of over 200 suspects.

In her retirement, Daxa has spent time playing with her favourite Kong ball and enjoying the occasional T-bone steak.

On behalf of everyone at the SaskSPCA, we thank Daxa and her handler for their years of service with the Prince Albert Police Service.



About the Stryker K-9 Care Fund

The SaskSPCA's Stryker K-9 Care Fund was established in 2015 to assist the owners of retired law enforcement dogs with the costs of routine and emergency veterinary care. The program is named after Police Service Dog (PSD) Stryker who served with the Saskatoon Police Service's K-9 Unit. To learn more about the Stryker K-9 Care Fund, including how to apply for the program and how to make a donation, visit our website at saskspca.ca/stryker.

Win Your Very Own SaskSPCA Licence Plate

We invite you to like and follow our social media channels – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn – for your chance to win a SaskSPCA licence plate!

Each month, we'll celebrate a topic or theme with a different contest opportunity – it could be animal trivia, might be a virtual scavenger hunt, or it could be as simple as nominating someone.

Anybody can win, you just need to make sure you like us on social media!

Want to learn more about how SaskSPCA licence plates support the SaskSPCA Pet Food Bank?

Visit www.saskspca.ca/licence-plates.

www.facebook.com/SaskSPCA

www.instagram.com/saskspca

www.twitter.com/SaskSPCA

www.linkedin.com/company/saskspca



What About My Pets?

The Link Between Relationship Breakdown and Pets



For many people, pets are considered part of the family and not mere items of personal property. However, in Saskatchewan, pets are defined as personal property according to *The Family Property Act*. When relationships break down, the spouse that has legal ownership gets to keep the pet. When an ownership dispute arises, courts have reiterated that they will not take a child custody approach. Instead, courts have weighed a series of factors to establish sole ownership for one spouse.

The factors the courts take into consideration are:

- Whether the pet was gifted by one spouse to the other
- Where the pet has been living since the spousal separation
- Which spouse was predominantly responsible for taking care of the animal and paying for its expenses
- The spouse's individual relationship with the pet

Spouses can protect against having a court determine ownership of a pet by coming to an agreement beforehand. This can be in the form of a pet provision in the separation contract or can be achieved through mediation. This can also be achieved by having a written agreement when the pet is brought into the relationship, with each party signing the agreement. While this is less than ideal, it will save time and money later on by not having to adjudicate the matter.

When there is a breakdown in a relationship, and spouses are not able to come to a mutual agreement with respect to their pet, in Saskatchewan, they can bring forward a claim to the courts for an interest in the pet. Before this claim can be brought forward, the parties in a relationship must first consider the length of their relationship to be eligible for a claim. Although the provinces differ, in Saskatchewan, if a couple is not married, they must have continuously been living together for a minimum of two years. If they are not

considered to be in a spousal relationship according to *The Family Property Act*, they will not be eligible to bring forward a claim to the courts.

If a couple has not been in a spousal relationship according to *The Family Property Act*, they must divide any property according to which party brought items into the relationship. With respect to animals, if it was bought together during the relationship, the parties need to consider who the primary caretaker of the pet was, as well, as if the pet was a gift. If the pet was not a gift, having the pet's registration, and veterinary records could be considered by a court in determining ownership.

If an owner is worried about their pet's wellbeing in the unfortunate circumstance of an owner passing away, they can establish a pet trust. The owner would name a beneficiary who would receive the funds in the trust to be used for the care of the pet according to the owner's wishes.

Pets play an important role in the lives of their owners. Therefore, it is best to plan ahead and avoid leaving the final determination to the courts. If the dispute does find its way to the court, and the court cannot reach a decision, it may order the sale of the pet and the splitting of proceeds between spouses. The sale of a pet would not be in anyone's interest, and thus it is always prudent to think ahead.



PBSC at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Law cannot provide legal advice. This document contains general discussion of certain legal and related issues only. It is not legal advice. Please consult a lawyer if you require legal advice.

Hot Weather Care: Pets in Hot Cars

There is **NO EXCUSE** for leaving your pet in a vehicle on a warm day!



Parked cars will heat up to dangerous temperatures rapidly, even on mild, sunny days. On a 26°C day, the temperature in a car can reach 46°C in 20 minutes.

In other words, even on a mild day, the temperature inside your vehicle can very quickly reach levels that are dangerous to your pet! Five minutes is five too many!

Research has shown that “precautions,” such as leaving the vehicle’s windows cracked or parking in the shade, are inadequate. They do not prevent the internal temperature of the vehicle from quickly reaching dangerous levels.

Heatstroke can be a fatal condition. Every year too many pets lose their lives as a result of heatstroke caused by having been left in a parked vehicle.

What should you **DO** if you find a pet left in a vehicle?

- Note the vehicle’s make, model, and registration;
- Ask businesses in the area to page the car’s owner(s) to return to their vehicle;



- Wait by the vehicle until the dog is safe;
- Call your local animal control or appropriate enforcement agency;
- Call the non-emergency number of your local police.

What should you **NOT DO** if you find a pet left in a vehicle?

- Break the vehicle’s window. Even with the best of intentions this is illegal and you could face criminal charges.

You can find more pet care tips by clicking on Resources at saskspca.ca.

Noisy Fireworks No Fun for Pets

When celebrating special occasions, the SaskSPCA would like to remind you that fireworks displays are no fun for pets.

The loud, unpredictable noise and flashing light from fireworks can be a source of stress and anxiety for many dogs and cats. As well, the metals and chemicals used in the manufacture of fireworks can be toxic if consumed by a curious pet.

We suggest keeping your pets indoors when fireworks are planned in your area.

How can you help to reduce the impact of a fireworks display?

Before the fireworks start, turn on the TV or play soothing music. Running the air conditioner or fan is another option.

Draw the curtains to help minimize exposure to noise and light, or take your pets to the basement, as far away from the unpleasant sounds as possible.

You might also consider providing a distraction for your pet such as a favourite toy or food treat.

Pets naturally seek small, enclosed spaces when they are feeling stressed. If your pet enjoys being crated, that may be a good option. Your cat may want to find her own special hiding space under furniture or on top of a cupboard.

Make sure your pets are microchipped and licenced, in case they manage to escape.

Your veterinarian may have other useful suggestions for a severely anxious pet.

One final note: Remember that noisy outdoor concerts and public events can also be very stressful for your pet.

Introducing Kenzie Makowsky, SaskSPCA Education Coordinator

Please join us in welcoming Kenzie Makowsky to the SaskSPCA family! Kenzie joined us in April as our new Education Coordinator.

Kenzie is a Registered Veterinary Technologist who joins the SaskSPCA with not only a background in veterinary knowledge, but also many years of experience in educational event planning.

During post-secondary training at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Kenzie worked at the Saskatoon Zoo and in small-animal practice. Following graduation Kenzie stayed at the same small-animal hospital until 2002 when she moved to Yorkton to be closer to the family farm at Canora.

Although she took an extended maternity leave to raise her family, Kenzie maintained her registered status with her professional association and continued to do volunteer work in the community, including work with the Yorkton RCMP Community Cadet Corp.

In 2009, Kenzie moved back to Saskatoon where she took on the volunteer position of Conference Chairperson for the Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists (SAVT). This role evolved into a part-time paid position which she held until 2020.

In recent years, Kenzie has volunteered on the SAVT Continuing Education Committee, the *Saskatchewan Animal Rescue Standards* Working Group, and various other committees for her children's activities.

In 2018, Kenzie decided it was time to get back into some hands-on animal care, so she signed on as a SCAT Street Cat Rescue bottle-baby foster. Since then, Kenzie and her family have fostered over 70 cats and kittens – and they're proud to say they've only kept one!

Kenzie's enthusiasm for organizing educational events, coupled with her passion for animal welfare has helped her easily transition into the newly created role of Education Coordinator with the SaskSPCA.

In addition to her love of animals, Kenzie's interests include camping, travelling, and spending time with her family.

In her role, Kenzie will organize a variety of educational events, including the Animal Welfare Conference, webinars, and training sessions.

Welcome, Kenzie!



Consider Your Pet's Safety When Traveling

Chances are that when you get into your vehicle, you buckle your seatbelt without even thinking about it; do you stop to think about your pet's safety when they travel with you?



Your pet should be restrained in your vehicle.

Suitable restraints include:

A crate, kennel, or carrier

- A sturdy, well secured crate/kennel/carrier is a safe way for your dog or cat to travel. Ensure that the crate is large enough for your pet to stand, lie down and turn around comfortably, and that it is well ventilated.
- Secure your pet's crate within your vehicle to avoid it (and your pet) becoming a dangerous projectile in the event of an accident.
 - Look for a crate that is designed to have a seatbelt attached to it.
 - If you drive an SUV, or similar, a large crate can be secured in the vehicle's cargo space. If you drive a car and/or your pet's crate is on the smaller side, it can be secured on the vehicle's backseat.
- Never place the crate on the front passenger seat as your pet is at risk of injury from the front passenger airbags

A car barrier

- A car barrier is intended to confine your dog to part of your vehicle. This minimizes the extent to which they are a distraction to you - the driver, and prevents them from becoming a projectile in the event of a crash
 - In a crash, your dog will be thrown around within the area to which they are confined, which may result in injury.
- Car barriers for cars typically confine a dog to the backseat, while barriers for SUVs keep the dog in the cargo space.
- While better than no restraint, a car barrier is not as effective as a crate at keeping your pet safe while traveling.

A car harness/seatbelt

- Dog seatbelts generally consist of a harness for your dog to wear and a tether to keep them on the seat.
 - Look for a harness with wide, well-padded straps as these will dissipate impact better in a crash.
 - Never attach a seatbelt to your dog's collar as they could be strangled in a crash.
- Tethers should be short enough to keep your dog from being thrown off the seat, but long enough that they can sit and lie down comfortably

For safety's sake, your pet should not travel in the following ways:

Loose in your vehicle

- As many as 1 in 5 American drivers admit to driving with a dog(s) loose in their vehicle. Loose pets are implicated in thousands of car accidents per year (Sharp, 2021 (US Data)).
- A loose pet can be a distraction to you - the driver - and could block your view of the road and/or other traffic.



- Loose pets can get into the driver's foot well, interfering with use of the pedals.
- Loose pets can become projectiles in the event of a crash. Not only can they be seriously injured - or worse - but they can also injure other passengers.
- In the event of an accident, loose pets can be a hazard to first responders.

On the front seat

- Airbags are designed to protect adult humans; they can cause serious injuries to your pet if they deploy in a crash.
- Pets should not ride in the front seat, even if they are in a crate/wearing a seatbelt.

With their head out of the window

- Although it's common to see a dog riding with their head sticking out of a car window, allowing your dog to ride like this is not a safe practice. With their heads out of the car window, dogs are at risk of:
 - Eye, ear and/or face injuries from flying debris, insects, etc.
 - Being thrown from the vehicle in a crash
 - Jumping out of a moving vehicle

In a truck bed

- Dogs in truck beds are at risk of:
 - Jumping or falling out of the truck bed. The fall itself may result in injury. The dog is also at risk of being run over - either by the vehicle they were riding in - or by other traffic
 - Injuries from debris, tree branches, etc.
 - In some provinces, it is illegal to transport an unsecured pet in the bed of a pick-up truck. Tethering a dog(s) in a truck bed is unacceptable as a means of restraint, as the dog could be dragged and/or hang themselves should they fall, or jump, out of the truck bed while tethered.
 - Approximately 100,000 pets die per year as a result of riding in a truck bed (*American Humane, 2016 (US Data)*)



Water Management is Key for Livestock

By Jessica Smith, PAg, Livestock and Feed Extension Specialist,
Regional Services Branch, Swift Current

Water is the most important nutrient for livestock. Not only does water need to be available to livestock, but the quality of that water is also very important. In 2021, of the 4,140 water samples from wells and dugouts submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, 25 per cent showed water quality levels below what is typically recommended.

High levels of TDS (total dissolved solids), sodium and sulphates are the main water quality concerns for livestock in Saskatchewan. They can cause damage to the health of your livestock and, in some cases, be fatal.

As you are moving animals on to new water sources, it is important to be aware of water quality issues. Handheld meters can be a useful tool to identify problem sources but should not replace a full laboratory analysis which will inform what the potential problems are and can confirm the water meter is calibrated accurately. Water samples can be brought to the nearest ministry regional office for testing, and livestock and feed extension specialists are able to assist with interpretation of results.

Scott and Robyn Gerbrandt raise cattle east of Swift Current and typically test all

their surface water sources once per year to ensure the water quality in their pastures is safe for their livestock to drink.

“Sometimes we have tested high-risk sources three times per year as we approached drought conditions,” Gerbrandt said.

One of their rented pastures uses well water for the livestock. This well also supplies an occupied house and, because of this, they assumed the water quality was good.

“After noticing decreased weaning weights and conception rates from this pasture, we were prompted to sample the water and determined there was a mineral imbalance caused by sulfates in the water source,” Gerbrandt explained.

This led to a change in their mineral program to help combat the copper deficiency caused by sulfates.

“We were so focused on our surface water quality (dugouts) that we overlooked the ground water source,” Gerbrandt said. “The solution was quite simple once testing identified the problem.”

Over the years the Gerbrandts have completed water development projects through the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program. They purchased two solar waterers to use in their intended summer locations but have found they use them in many other locations.

“Cattle prefer to drink out of the trough rather than standing in the water,” Gerbrandt added. “This significantly decreases the amount of disturbance in the water, therefore the water they consume doesn’t contain suspended solids from the bed of the dugout or stream. This also helps prevent damage to the riparian area around the water source, which leads to better natural filtration of the water and it really is a win-win for the cattle and the environment.”

Knowing the quality of your water sources helps inform management decisions to ensure the health and productivity of your herd. Information on the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program can be found at saskatchewan.ca/FRWIP. Inquiries can also be made to the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at **1-866-457-2377** and they will direct you to the appropriate specialist.

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