

Summer Safety for Dogs in Water

Make your dog's safety in the water a top priority this summer.

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Summer is right around the corner, and pet owners must keep a watchful eye on their dogs when spending time around open water such as beaches, lakes and rivers with their canine companions.

"Americans love the water; we have many beaches, lakes, and pools to enjoy this summer. Just remember to take care of your pet's safety when having fun," says Ron Faoro, DVM, president of the California Veterinary Medical Association.

Some precautions and advice to follow this summer include: Never throw your dog into the water. Instead, dog owners should get into the water first, and let their dogs enter on their own and swim toward their owners at their own pace. Caution should be taken when dogs are exiting a water area due to slippery paws. Consider using exit devices such as a ladder, ramp, or steps. Owners can teach their dogs to use these devices by either showing them physically or by example. Flotation devices are useful for dogs new to the water or not strong enough to swim on their own. Dogs should never be left alone in the water, however, even with floatation devices, Faoro says. Rinse your dog off with fresh water after swimming in chlorinated water. The chemicals in the water may be dangerous to dogs. Take fresh water with you when you go to the beach. Ocean water could make your dog sick and shouldn't be swallowed.

Is your dog ready for summer? Find out with our exclusive Get Ready for Summer Checklist.