

Infinity Dogs Community Interest Company

Registered company: 14947355

Hot Weather Welfare & Training Policy Policy no 7

1. Policy Purpose and Core Principle

- **Welfare First:** Assistance dogs cannot work reliably if they are physically stressed or experiencing heat discomfort.
- **Handler Support:** We aim to modify, rather than outright cancel, training to support our handlers' continuity of learning.
- **Force-Free Ethics:** Forcing a dog to work through heat exhaustion violates our foundational force free training commitment.

2. Temperature Thresholds & Action Plan

We monitor local UK Met Office forecasts to determine daily operational levels.

| Outdoor Temp | Operational Status | Required Actions & Modifications |
|--------------|----------------------|---|
| Below 21°C | Normal Operations | Standard training protocols apply. Refresh water regularly. |
| 21°C – 24°C | Caution Level | Frequent water breaks. No asphalt/pavement work during peak sun. Shift focus to low-intensity tasks. |
| 25°C – 28°C | Modified Training | Cancel all outdoor public access training. Move sessions online or to the indoor barn. |
| 29°C + | Severe Heat Protocol | Immediate suspension of all physical training sessions. All classes switch to Zoom/online format or postponed depending on suitability. |

Meetings, including those of trainers, volunteers and handlers might be moved from in person to online to accommodate any adverse weather conditions. For this reason we advise that where accommodation has been booked, it is a refundable booking. Cancellations are inevitably disappointing but beyond our control and safety will always be our priority. In the event of other adverse weather conditions (eg snow) we have the right to cancel and rearrange training sessions.

3. Public Access & Outdoor Training

- **The 5-Second Rule:** Handlers must test pavements in the direct sun with the back of their hand for 5 seconds. If too hot for human skin, it is too hot for dog paws.

- **Time Restrictions:** If outdoor work is necessary at lower caution temperatures, sessions must occur before 10:00 AM or after 6:00 PM.
- **Enrichment Swaps:** Standard walking or public access training may be swapped for stationary scent work, environmental confidence building in shaded areas, or cooperative care training.

4. Vehicle Safety Mandate

- **Zero Tolerance:** No assistance dog or dog in training may be left unattended in a stationary vehicle under any circumstances, regardless of duration, shade, or open windows.
- **Rapid Heating:** Internal car temperatures can spike from 22°C to 47°C within one hour.
- **Travel Rules:** Vehicles used to transport dogs to training must have functioning air conditioning running throughout the journey, or else cancel the session. During a heat wave this includes public transport.

5. Identifying Heatstroke in Assistance Dogs

Trainers and handlers must actively monitor for early signs of heat stroke:

- **Early Signs:** Heavy, frantic panting; drooling, dark red or sticky gums; thick saliva; dizziness, lethargy or reluctance to respond to cues.
- **Advanced Signs:** Increased heart rate, diarrhoea, vomiting, stumbling, muscle tremors, unsteadiness, or collapse.
- **Emergency Action:** If heatstroke is suspected, immediately move the dog to a cool shaded area, pour cool water over their body, use a gentle fan, and call the vet instantly or ask another to call the vet whilst you apply emergency action.

14. Policy Review and Associated Documents

- **Policy 7 (Version 1)**
- **Effective Date:** June 2026
- **Next Review Date:** June 2027 (or sooner if legislative changes occur).