

10 TIPS TO KEEP PETS SAFE IN GREEN VALLEY

Green Valley is a beautiful community but is also in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, and therefore home to wild animals that live and travel in the washes, arroyos, and look for food in our garbage cans or for heat relief and water in our patio, home, or storage units with doors left open. Pets are particularly vulnerable.

PREDATORS

1. Hungry hawks, owls, coyotes, and bobcats can snatch your cat or small dog when they're outside, even in your walled patio. Veterinarians urge residents of Southern Arizona to keep cats indoors.

When you let your dogs out, *be visible with them* so predators are more likely to stay away. Danger can strike fast. The most dangerous times of day are at dawn and dusk when predators are out searching for prey, but they can strike at any time.

RATTLESNAKES

2. For your dogs' safety, *keep them on leash whenever you walk them*, even if they come when called. Dogs have been killed by rattlesnakes that seek shade under bushes and rocks. In case of a snake bite, do not waste time trying to extract the poison (which doesn't work)! Go *immediately* to your vet or a 24-hour animal emergency center in Tucson (there are none in Green Valley).

**Snake aversion training is available at Central Pet in Amado, AZ
520-398-7577, www.centralpetaz.com**

24 HOUR ANIMAL EMERGENCY CENTERS IN TUCSON

Southern AZ Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Center,
Central location: 141 E Fort Lowell, 520-888-3177
Broadway location: 74474 E Broadway Blvd, 520-888-3177

Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson
4909 N La Canada Drive, 520-795-9955

JAVELINAS

3. Javelinas are wild animals (peccaries) that look like hairy black pigs. They can and have attacked humans and dogs, especially if the javelina is a mother with babies. Even large dogs have been injured or killed here in Green Valley. Keeping your dogs on leash helps keep them safe. Always walk *away* from javelinas.

If you walk your dog when it's dark (not recommended), use a bright flashlight to be able to spot a snake or javelinas in your path.

CACTUS

4. Another reason to keep your dogs on leash is to help them avoid walking on painful, tiny cactus spines on the ground – especially from the cholla (pronounced “choi – ya”). They cause sharp, burning pain and cling to whatever they touch. If it happens, use a small-toothed comb and gently comb the cactus spines out. It may be necessary to use tweezers, or take your pet to a vet.

HEAT STROKE AND BURNS

5. In the summer, the pavement gets so hot, it can burn your dog's paw pads. To prevent injury, walk your dog in the early morning or closer to sundown when the pavement is relatively cool. Put your bare foot on the pavement to test it. Veterinarians here say, “If it's too hot for you to walk on barefoot, it's too hot for your dog.”

It is against the law in AZ to leave your pet in a car, no matter what the temperature – even if it's cool. Too many pets have died while the owner went into a store “just for a few minutes.”

If you're taking your canine on a hike, bring along water for them as well as for yourself. Hike only in the coolest parts of the day. Heat stroke is fatal without immediate treatment. In general, make sure your pets always have plenty of fresh water and relief from the sun.

Signs of *heat exhaustion* in dogs include: excessive panting, pacing, bright red gums, rapid heart rate while at rest, anxiety, restlessness. Call your vet and google “heat exhaustion in dogs.”

Signs of *heat stroke*: wobbly or “drunk” walking, drooling, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, seizure. Seek emergency treatment immediately!

TOXIC WEED KILLER

6. Most Green Valley landscaping companies use a blue-colored weed killer (Clean-Up, an industrial strength form of Round-Up is common). The ASPCA poison control toxicologists recommend keeping pets from walking on areas treated with herbicides until the areas are dry. To be on the safe side, wash your pet’s paws if they walk on the treated area (even if dry) to help them avoid ingesting the chemicals when they lick their paws.

RABIES: BATS, SKUNKS, AND FOXES

7. There are many species of bats here in Arizona, and many have rabies. Sometimes bats can get inside your house. If you see your dog or cat playing with one, take your pet to the vet *immediately!* Vets here in S. Arizona recommend vaccinating your cats as well as your dogs for rabies.

COLORADO RIVER TOAD

8. Found in the Sonoran Desert. Pets come into contact with these toads in the rainy seasons. If the pet licks the toad or puts it in his mouth, symptoms of poisoning include: crying, pawing at his mouth or eyes, drooling, red or pale gums, difficulty breathing, unsteady movements, seizures, collapse. Take your pet *immediately* to your vet or 24 hour emergency care.

VALLEY FEVER

9. Valley Fever is caused by inhaling spores of a fungus that is found in the soil. When the soil is disturbed by scratching or digging in the dust or by high winds, humans and animals can inhale the spores that infect the lungs. If the immune system is strong, the person or animal doesn’t get sick. If not,

early signs of Valley Fever in dogs include a dry, hacking cough, loss of appetite and weight loss, lack of energy, and fever. As of 2016 there is no cure or vaccine, but there is anti-fungal medication. Without treatment, the disease can attack other parts of the body and lead to death.

GETTING LOST

10. Thunder storms and 4th of July fireworks are prime events when dogs take flight. Even little dogs can climb or jump over patio walls. Dogs left in hot cars on parking lots are highly motivated to jump out. Getting lost in the Sonoran desert can be a death sentence, even if they survive busy traffic intersections.

If your pet is lost, contact:

<http://www.nokillpimacounty.org/get-help/lost-pet/>

Animal League of Green Valley at www.talgv.org or 520-625-3170

Pima Animal Control Center in Tucson: www.paccintake.pima.gov 520-743-7550

Humane Society of S. Arizona (Tucson): www.hssaz.org 520-327-6088, ext. 111

Hope Animal Shelter in Tucson: www.hopeanimalshelter.net

For more information on pets and safety or to attend Healthy Pet Monthly Workshops, contact Animal Care Center of Green Valley at 520-625-0433 or visit the website, www.AnimalCareCenter.com.

PICK UP YOUR POOCH'S POOP

Consideration for your fellow neighbors is important. Perhaps the first commandment of responsible dog ownership is "Thou shalt scoop your dog's poop whether it's on common ground or someone's property." Carry a bag with you on your dog walks. Don't leave home without it!