

Keep Your Cat Safe Around Water

Veterinarians offer tips to help you make safety a top priority when your cat is around sources of open water.

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Planning to take your cat on vacation with you this summer? The California Veterinary Medical Association reminds cat owners to be cautious about their animals' safety around open-water areas such as beaches, lakes, rivers and swimming pools. Cats and dogs can drown, become severely hurt or die from exposure to open waters.

Contrary to what some owners may believe, not all pets know how to swim. Owners should never throw their pets into the water, the California Veterinary Medical Association said. Owners should get in the water first and call to the pet. An animal that likes the water will come in and start to swim toward the owner.

"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," said Ron Faoro, DVM, president of the California Veterinary Medical Association. "Taking a few extra precautions can make all the difference."

Make the water safer for your pet in these ways: Show your pet how to use a ladder to exit a swimming pool. Consider purchasing animal exit devices for your pool. Put a life jacket on your pet when you take it to a lake, river or beach. Rinse your pet's fur after it exits a pool to remove pool chemicals. Do not let your pet drink ocean water. Bring fresh water with you to the beach.

"Pets can play safely around open water if pet owners act responsibly," Faoro said. "Pets and their owners both can have fun if the owners follow these few precautions."