

Don't let your dog kill you

By **ROBERT ALCOCK**

NEW safety regulations enforcing the use of child car seats should be copied for animal passengers, a local campaigner says.

Heather Goadsby runs the Southport branch of Barking Mad in Hampton Road – an agency that arranges home pet care services for owners who do not want to use kennels.

She is concerned that driving with an unharnessed dog could be lethal for both the pet and its owner. "If you make a sudden emergency stop, or are involved in a crash at just 30mph, a dog who is not restrained in the back seat can turn into a potentially lethal missile.

"A small dog, such as a Westie,

'Canine cannonball' alert

would be hurled from the back shelf at the head of someone sitting in the front of a car like a canine cannonball.

"A large breed, such as a Labrador, could be catapulted through the car with the force of a baby elephant, in all likelihood injuring all in its way.

"In both cases it is unlikely that the dog would survive such an impact."

Further dangers she pointed to include loose dogs escaping from accidents and being run over, or even causing another accident.

And some dogs – particularly large breeds – would become frightened and aggressive, poten-

tially hampering rescue efforts.

Heather said the government is now planning legislation to address the issue, following the introduction last month of rules that booster seats and cushions should be used by children less than 1.35 metres tall (approximately 4 ft 5in).

Heather added: "Dogs should be behind a guard, which can be purchased from about £20 from motor-ing stores and some car dealerships. Otherwise, use a car harness.

"Never allow dogs to sit in the front seat – especially if you have passenger airbags!"



● Heather Goadsby with potential "canine cannonball" Max

Photo by Gareth Jones Code GJ171006C-1

