



PET SAFETY IN COLD WEATHER

KEEP PETS INSIDE: Cats and dogs should be kept inside during cold weather. It's a common belief that dogs and cats are more resistant than people to cold weather because of their fur, but it's untrue. Like people, cats and dogs are susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia and should be kept inside.

PROVIDE VETERINARY CARE: Make sure your pet has routine visits with a veterinarian. Cold weather may worsen some medical conditions. Just like people, pets' cold tolerance can vary from pet to pet based on their coat, body fat stores, activity level, and health. Be aware of your pet's tolerance for cold weather, and adjust accordingly. You may need to shorten your dog's walks in very cold weather. Very young and very old pets may be at higher risk.

PROVIDE SHELTER: It's always best to keep pets inside. However, if you are unable to keep your pet inside during cold weather, provide him/her with a warm, solid shelter against wind. Make sure that they have unlimited access to fresh, non-frozen water. The floor of the shelter should be off of the ground (to minimize heat loss into the ground) and the bedding should be thick, dry and changed regularly to provide a warm, dry environment. The door to the shelter should be positioned away from prevailing winds.

MAKE SOME NOISE: A warm vehicle engine can be an appealing heat source for outdoor and feral cats, but it's deadly. Check underneath your car, bang on the hood, and honk the horn before starting the engine to encourage feline hitchhikers to abandon their roost under the hood.

FEED WELL: Keep your pet at a healthy weight throughout the winter. Outdoor pets may require more calories in the winter to generate enough body heat and energy to keep them warm – talk to your veterinarian about your pet's nutritional needs during cold weather.

RECOGNIZE PROBLEMS: If your pet is whining, shivering, seems anxious, slows down or stops moving, seems weak, or starts looking for warm places to burrow, get them back inside quickly because they are showing signs of hypothermia. Frostbite is harder to detect, and may not be fully recognized until a few days after the damage is done. If you suspect your pet has hypothermia or frostbite, consult your veterinarian immediately.