

COLD WEATHER TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR PET

1. Keep your cat inside. Outdoor cats can freeze, become lost or stolen, injured or killed. Cats that go outside are also exposed to infectious diseases.
2. During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars for warmth. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
3. Never let your dog off leash in the snow and ice, especially during a snow storm. Dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than any other season. So make sure yours always wears ID tags on their collar and are microchipped.
4. Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs, stomach, and paws when they come in out of the sleet, snow, or ice. Your pet can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws. Their paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice, so keep hair around paw pads trimmed. Less hair will help keep paws free of ice and snow, which can quickly ball up between their foot pads and create uncomfortable walking conditions. Consider dog boots if your dog reacts negatively to walking on snow and ice.
5. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to completely dry them before letting them outside. If you have a short-haired breed, consider a coat or sweater with a high collar with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly.
6. Never leave your cat or dog alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to develop hypothermia, frost bite and freeze to death.
7. Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs, and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. Cold weather may also exacerbate certain conditions, such as arthritis. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness, or breed-type, take them outdoors only to relieve themselves.
8. If your dog spends a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities, increase their supply of food, particularly protein. Indoor dogs, with a decrease in exercise, may need less food. Make sure to provide fresh, unfrozen water. If your dog lives outside, consider investing in a heated water bowl.
9. Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Many animals like the sweet smell and taste of antifreeze and even small amounts can be lethal to them. If you suspect your pet has ingested antifreeze, call us immediately, since timing is critical.
10. Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. If you can't keep your pet indoors during the winter months, provide an elevated, insulated structure with a door to protect your pet from wind and weather. Provide dry, clean bedding materials such as straw, wood chips, or blankets and replace bedding if it becomes damp or wet. Find a house large enough for your pet to be able to stand up and turn around, but small enough to retain body heat. If it is less than 32 degrees Fahrenheit, you must bring your pet inside.
11. Keep your pets away from rivers, ponds, and lakes as they begin to freeze. Use caution even when the water appears completely frozen.