

Weather Tips for Your Pet

Cold Weather Care



Cold weather tips from the Hinsdale Humane Society to keep your pet safe

Cold weather is officially here and it's important to remember that pets have to endure the same bitter temperatures as their owners. Pets rely on people to help them stay warm when the weather is cold. Here are a few tips to keep your pets safe during the cold days of winter.

Bring your pet inside: Don't leave your pet outside in the cold for long periods of time. Wind chill makes the air colder than actual temperature readings. Be attentive to your pet's body temperature and limit time outdoors, especially to prevent frostbite on ears, tail and feet. Regardless of the season, shorthaired, very young or very old dogs and all cats should never be left outside without supervision. Short coated dogs may feel more comfortable wearing a sweater during walks.

Provide adequate shelter: Adequate shelter is mandatory by law. If your dog lives outdoors, you must provide a well-insulated and draft-free doghouse. The opening should face south with a sturdy, flexible covering to prevent icy winds from entering. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and the doorway should be covered with straw -NOT hay. Avoid towels and blankets which can easily dampen and make the space colder.

Beware of antifreeze and rock salt: Antifreeze, which often collects on driveways and roadways, is highly poisonous. Although it smells and tastes good to your pet -- it is lethal. If you suspect your pet has ingested antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately! Rock salt, used to melt ice on sidewalks, can irritate footpads. Be sure to rinse and dry your pet's feet after being outside.

Dry off wet pets : Towel or blow-dry your pet if he gets wet from rain or snow. It is important to dry and clean his paws to prevent tiny cuts and cracked pads.

Provide plenty of food and water: It takes more energy in the winter to keep body temperature regulated, so your pet needs additional calories if he spends a lot of time outdoors or is a working animal. Routinely check your pet's water dish to make certain the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal as when the temperature is low, your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to metal. And, remember that snow is not a substitute for water.

Carefully keep pets warm inside: Keep your pets warm, dry and away from drafts while inside. Tiles and uncarpeted areas might become very cold, so place blankets and pads on floors in these areas. Be careful of supplemental heat sources. Make sure all fireplaces have screens and keep portable heaters out of reach.

Groom regularly: Your pet needs a well-groomed coat to keep him properly insulated. Short or coarse-haired dogs might get extra cold so consider a sweater or a coat. Long-haired dogs should have their paw hair clipped to ease snow removal and the cleaning of their feet.

Hinsdale Humane Society, 22 N. Elm St. Hinsdale, IL. 60521

www.hinsdalehumanesociety.org

630-323-5630