

Cold Weather Tips for your Companion Animals

Please follow these guidelines to protect your companion animal when the temperature drops:

- **Keep your cat inside.** Outdoors, cats can freeze, become lost or stolen, or be injured or killed.
- **Outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars to keep warm.** When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed. To prevent this, bang loudly on the hood to give a sleeping cat a chance to escape.
- **Never let your dog off-leash on snow or ice,** especially during a snowstorm. Dogs frequently lose their scent in snow and ice and become lost. They may panic in a snowstorm and run away. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season.
- **Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach** when she comes in out of the rain, snow or ice. Check her sensitive paw pads, which may bleed from snow or ice encrusted in them. Salt, antifreeze or other chemicals could hurt your dog if she ingests them while licking her paws.
- **Provide a warm coat or sweater** for your dog if she is a short-haired breed. Look for one with a high collar or turtleneck that covers your dog from the base of her tail on top and to the belly underneath. While this may seem like a luxury, it is a necessity for many dogs.
- **Never leave your dog or cat alone in a car during cold weather.** A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold. Your companion animal could freeze to death.
- **If your dog is sensitive to the cold** due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only long enough to relieve himself.
- **Puppies do not tolerate the cold** as well as adult dogs and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If necessary, paper train your puppy inside if he appears to be sensitive to the weather.
- **If your dog spends a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities,** increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep his fur thick and healthy.
- **Antifreeze, even in very tiny doses, is a lethal poison for dogs and cats.** Because of its sweet taste, animals are attracted to it. Thoroughly clean up any spills from your car. To prevent accidental poisonings, use animal-friendly products that contain propylene glycol rather than the traditional products containing ethylene glycol. Call your veterinarian or contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center if you suspect your animal has been poisoned: aspca.org or **800.548.2423**.
- **Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter.** Leave the coat longer, which provides more warmth. Longer fur requires frequent brushing due to dry winter air and static electricity. When you bathe your dog, make sure she is completely dry before you take her out for a walk.
- **Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep** far away from all drafts and off the floor, such as in a dog or cat bed or basket with a warm blanket or pillow in it.

PAWS thanks and recognizes the ASPCA for the information contained in this document.