

As temperatures fall and the threat of ice and snow increases, it's important to keep the safety of your pets in mind. Winter brings a whole new set of dangers for pets both outdoors and inside. Extreme temperatures, deicing chemicals, and secondary heat sources within the home can seriously injure your pets. A good rule to remember is that if you are cold, then your pets are cold. Cats and dogs are susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite much like humans and exposed skin on ears, noses, and paws can freeze and suffer permanent damage. As a pet owner, there are many ways to protect your furry friends, so please consider the tips below.

Winter shelter considerations for pets:

- If you have outdoor pets, consider bringing them inside during cold weather.
- Create a shelter in a utility room or garage with warm bedding and adequate food and water.
- If there is no place for pets inside the home, provide a space outside that is weather proof, can withstand wind, and is elevated so paws stay off the ground.
- Provide bedding such as old carpet, blankets, towels, or straw for pets to sleep on and retain warmth.
- Snow and ice do not provide a sufficient source of hydration for outside pets so provide an insulated or heated bowl for outside use.



Pet safety in cold weather:

- Cats will often seek shelter under the hoods of automobiles for warmth. Before starting the car, be sure to tap loudly on the hood or honk the horn in order to allow cats to escape and prevent injury.
- During and after walks, wipe down or wash your dog's feet, legs, and belly to remove deicers, antifreeze, or other harmful chemicals used to melt snow in your neighborhood. Even a small amount of antifreeze ingested by a pet can be fatal.
- Dogs can easily lose their scent trail, becoming lost in icy conditions and snowstorms, so do not allow dogs off the leash.
- Never leave your pet alone in a car during cold weather. Vehicles can retain cold and cause your pets to freeze to death.
- Be cautious with space heaters in the home. Pets can burn themselves if they get too close to the heat or turn the heater over putting the entire home at risk for fire.
- Keep any caged pets, such as birds, away from drafty or cold areas of your house.