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Cold Weather Tips

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

- Keep your cat inside. Outdoors, cats can freeze, become lost or be stolen, injured or killed. Cats who are allowed to stray are exposed to fatal infectious diseases, including rabies. Also, cats prey on wildlife.

- During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes choose to sleep under the hoods of cars, where it is warmer. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed in the fan belt. Before starting the engine, bang loudly on the car hood for a few seconds to give a cat a chance to escape.

- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm. Dogs frequently lose their scent in snow and ice and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure they always wear I.D. tags.

- Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when she comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. Salt, antifreeze or other chemicals could hurt your dog if she ingests them while licking her paws. Also her sensitive paw pads may bleed from snow or ice encrusted on them.

- If you own a short-haired breed, consider getting a warm coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck for your dog. Look for one that covers the dog from the base of her tail on top 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. The 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. Unfortunately, because of its sweet taste, animals are attracted to it. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle. To prevent accidental poisonings, more and more people are using animal-friendly products that contain propylene glycol rather than traditional products containing ethylene glycol. Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (*contact information below*) if you suspect that your companion animal has been poisoned.

- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter. Leave the coat in a longer style for more warmth. Remember that such a style will require more frequent brushing due to dry winter air and static electricity. When you bathe your dog, completely dry her before taking 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 with a warm blanket or pillow in it.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
National Headquarters - 424 E. 92nd St. - New York, NY 10128-6804 - (212) 876-7700 - www.aspca.org
ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center - 1717 South Philo Road, Suite 36 - Urbana, IL 61802 -1-888-4ANI-HELP
($45 per case, credit card only) or 1-900-680-0000 ($45 per case) - www.napcc.aspca.org