

COLD WEATHER TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR PET

Keep your cat inside, especially during the dead of winter. Cats can easily freeze, become lost or stolen, get hurt or even get killed outside.

Take your dog outside only for as long as it takes to relieve himself. Dogs, particularly small, short-haired breeds like Chihuahuas or Terriers, suffer from the cold despite their seemingly warm fur coats.

Consider getting your dog a warm sweater for those cold winter months, particularly if you own a small, short-haired breed. Look for a sweater that fits snugly on your dog's body, especially his vulnerable belly. While it may seem like a frivolous expense, a sweater makes strong sense if your dog shivers in the cold.

Never let your dog off leash in snow or icy conditions. Dogs frequently lose their scent in snow and ice and can easily become lost. More dogs are lost during cold weather than at any other time.

Never leave your dog alone in a car in cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold. Your dog could literally freeze to death.

Increase your pet's supply of food, especially proteins, to keep his fur thick and healthy during the cold winter months. Talk to your veterinarian about vitamin and oil supplements.

Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep far away from all drafts and preferably off of the floor – such as in a basket or in a cardboard box with a blanket in it.

Refrain from clipping your dog's hair too short in the winter. Leaving his coat longer will help keep him warm which is more important than how he looks. Brush your dog daily instead of clipping him. Brushing keeps your dog's coat shiny, healthy and free of mats.

During the winter, cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars where they can heat from a warm engine. If you were to start the car with the cat under the hood, the cat could get caught in or flung about by the fan blades, causing serious injury or even death. Always bang on the hood several times before starting your car in cold weather.

Antifreeze, even in small doses, can be lethal in dogs and cats. They are attracted to antifreeze due to its sweet taste. Be sure to promptly wipe up any antifreeze spills.