

# COLD WEATHER and your PET



Cold weather can pose serious threats to the health of your four-legged family members, which is why it's recommended to keep your pets inside. But when you do take them out for a walk or the potty, the Prince George's County Animal Services Division encourages pet owners to closely monitor their exposure to winter elements throughout the season and to remember the law.

## If your dog stays outdoors in cold weather, County law requires the following:

- All domestic animals except livestock are prohibited from being kept outdoors when the effective outdoor wind chill index is 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- A dog house of the proper size that is dry, draft-free, and raised off the ground;
- A wind flap attached to the doghouse to keep cold air out and warm air in;
- Bedding that is non-absorbent such as straw or wood shavings to help keep the dog warm; and
- Routinely check your pet's drinking water to make sure it is not frozen and use a secured container to prevent tipping.

## Some tips pet owners should consider during cold weather:

- Keep kittens and puppies under six months, and small, short-haired or old dogs inside.
- Increase the amount of their food; outdoor dogs need more calories in the winter to produce body heat.
- Never let your dog off their leash in the snow or ice; they can become disoriented and lost, even in a familiar place. Be sure your pet has an ID tag, microchip and sturdy leash.
- Wipe or rinse off your pet's paws after an outing with a wet cloth to remove any ice or chemicals used to melt snow on sidewalks that can irritate their paws. Salt can irritate or burn, as well as causing vomiting and in some pets can even cause seizures. Antifreeze has a sweet, attractive smell to pets and can be deadly if ingested.
- Keep your pets indoors during freezing temperatures. If left unattended outdoors they can get frostbite or become disorientated and freeze to death. Hypothermia can result from extended exposure to cold and is a life-threatening condition.
- Don't leave your pet in a closed car in the winter because it can be just as deadly as in the summer.
- If you have bunnies who live outside, make sure they have a warm, dry hutch with plenty of bedding that is out of the wind. Water is important too as is some extra food. Cover the hutch with a tarp.
- If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on your car hood before starting the engine to give them a chance to escape. Cats like to seek shelter from the cold and can be under the hood of your car.



For more information about pet care, visit [www.princegeorgespets4us.com](http://www.princegeorgespets4us.com) or contact the Animal Services Facility at (301) 780-7200.



# COLD WEATHER and your PET



Cold weather can pose serious threats to the health of your four-legged family members, which is why it's recommended to keep your pets inside. But when you do take them out for a walk or the potty, the Prince George's County Animal Services Division encourages pet owners to closely monitor their exposure to winter elements throughout the season and to remember the law.

## If your dog stays outdoors in cold weather, County law requires the following:

- All domestic animals except livestock are prohibited from being kept outdoors when the effective outdoor wind chill index is 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- A dog house of the proper size that is dry, draft-free, and raised off the ground;
- A wind flap attached to the doghouse to keep cold air out and warm air in;
- Bedding that is non-absorbent such as straw or wood shavings to help keep the dog warm; and
- Routinely check your pet's drinking water to make sure it is not frozen and use a secured container to prevent tipping.

## Some tips pet owners should consider during cold weather:

- Keep kittens and puppies under six months, and small, short-haired or old dogs inside.
- Increase the amount of their food; outdoor dogs need more calories in the winter to produce body heat.
- Never let your dog off their leash in the snow or ice; they can become disoriented and lost, even in a familiar place. Be sure your pet has an ID tag, microchip and sturdy leash.
- Wipe or rinse off your pet's paws after an outing with a wet cloth to remove any ice or chemicals used to melt snow on sidewalks that can irritate their paws. Salt can irritate or burn, as well as causing vomiting and in some pets can even cause seizures. Antifreeze has a sweet, attractive smell to pets and can be deadly if ingested.
- Keep your pets indoors during freezing temperatures. If left unattended outdoors they can get frostbite or become disorientated and freeze to death. Hypothermia can result from extended exposure to cold and is a life-threatening condition.
- Don't leave your pet in a closed car in the winter because it can be just as deadly as in the summer.
- If you have bunnies who live outside, make sure they have a warm, dry hutch with plenty of bedding that is out of the wind. Water is important too as is some extra food. Cover the hutch with a tarp.
- If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on your car hood before starting the engine to give them a chance to escape. Cats like to seek shelter from the cold and can be under the hood of your car.



For more information about pet care, visit [www.princegeorgespets4us.com](http://www.princegeorgespets4us.com) or contact the Animal Services Facility at (301) 780-7200.

