



PET SAFETY TIPS FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

Cold Weather

A fur coat does not exclude pets from frostbite and hypothermia, but how cold is too cold?

If it is below freezing, pets should not be left outside for extended periods of time.

“Wind chill warning” means keep your pet’s time outside to a minimum.

Bring them in if they are shivering, vocalizing, or doing the paw hop.

Young and old pets or pets on medication can be more susceptible to the cold - keep them indoors as much as possible.

Ethylene glycol, found in anti-freeze and some brake fluids, tastes sweet to pets but can cause death.

Be sure to clean up spills and store it where pets cannot reach. Watch for spills when out on walks.

Salt or Snow melting chemicals, can be ingested. Wipe your pet’s paws to prevent them from cleaning these substances from their paws or use "booties".

Toxic Temptations

Fresh florals commonly used in holiday decorating can be toxic to pets. You may want to place plants out of reach of your pet.

- Mistletoe can cause vomiting, diarrhea and lethargy.
- Holly can cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and lethargy.
- Poinsettias can irritate your pet’s mouth, cause nausea or mild vomiting.
- Lilies, can cause kidney failure in cats.

Christmas trees pose many dangers to pets. Consider decorating your tree, or at least the bottom third, with ornaments that are less likely to attract your pet’s attention, such as dried non-toxic flowers, wood, fabric or pine cones.

Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers and bacteria. If ingested it could cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea in your pet.

Decorations such as ribbons are very attractive to pets, especially cats, and if ingested can cause intestinal obstruction.

Sparkly lights are equally attractive, but can become life threatening if your pet decides to chew the cords.

Ensure any tinsel, ribbons, ornaments and ornament hooks that fall to the floor are picked up immediately and secure your tree so that it can’t be toppled or knocked over.

Supervise your pet and use barriers (e.g. baby gates) and topical pet deterrents (e.g. bitter apple spray, a bad-tasting substance available from most pet stores) as necessary to keep your pet safe from holiday temptations.

Chocolate and other holiday sweets are not for pets.

Chocolate can be poisonous to many animals depending on the amount and type ingested. Dark chocolate is most dangerous, but chocolate poisoning can even occur if small amounts are fed repeatedly.

Christmas treats should always be monitored.

Milk products can cause pets to become ill as they lose their ability to digest lactose with age.

Alcohol should never be in reach of pets. If your pet ingests alcohol he can become very sick and weak and may go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.

Holiday leftovers may give your

dog or cat severe indigestion and diarrhea.

Poultry bones can splinter and cause blockages.

Greasy, spicy and fatty foods can cause stomach upset and don't forget to store the garbage safely out of reach from your pet.

Car Hazards

Never leave your pet in your car during cold weather. The space is too large to heat with their body heat and they could freeze to death.

It is never a good idea to let your pets roam, but in snowy weather they easily lose their way and sound dampening effects mean pets can't hear cars coming.

Cats seeking warmth often end up inside car engines which could prove fatal. Be sure to knock on your hood before starting your car.

Exercise

It is important that pet receive daily exercise and it is one of the best ways of warming up in cooler weather.

However the following cautions should be observed:

- Wipe your pets paws free of salt or other chemicals. Be sure to check for ice balls, dry cracking pads or other injuries.
- If your pet is having difficulty exercising

due to snow, icy surfaces, or appears to be winded, shorten the usual exercise times.

- Coats and booties help your dog stay toasty warm.
- Don't shave your dog down to the skin - a longer coat will provide more warmth.
- After bathing your pet ensure he is completely dry before allowing them outside.

Outdoor Pets

It is recommended that all pets be allowed to spend their winter days indoors.

However, those pets that do spend a great deal of time outside still need protection.

Cats and dogs that live outside require more calories in the winter allowing their body to produce heat, and it is recommended that owners check water dishes frequently to ensure it's not frozen or spilled over.

To keep pets comfortable and warm at night, try a hot water bottle.

Ensure your pet has adequate shelter.

Sufficient dog houses are:

- An appropriate size. Bigger is not better - dogs use their body heat to heat the house, and if the space is too large they will freeze.
- Built with weatherproof materials.
- Facing away from prevailing winds.
- Filled with straw bedding that

is changed frequently.

Blankets and rugs freeze too quickly.

- Elevated 6 inches off the ground.
- Insulated with Styrofoam, with a clear rubberized covering on the doors.
- Easy for your pet to get into.
- Built with a small hallway leading to a larger resting space.
- Do not use a heat lamp or other type of home heater as it may cause fires.
- On the coldest days allow the pet to come indoors.

NEVER surprise a loved one with a pet as a gift.

The best holiday present for your pet is plenty of love and attention. Include your pet in your holiday activities and give him or her lots of attention, play time and appropriate exercise!