



Des Moines County Humane Society
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BURLINGTON, Iowa - The snow and frigid temperatures are here. While you bundle up in woolly hats, warm down coats and cozy boots, remember you are not the only one affected by the cold.

Cats and dogs feel the cold as well and precautions need to be taken to keep pets safe during the winter.

Here are some tips for making sure your pets stay safe and warm this winter.

1. Keep cats inside as they are susceptible to frostbite. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang on your car hood before starting the engine as cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars to keep warm. If you are feeding homeless cats, be sure to provide an insulated shelter for them.
2. Dogs should stay inside as well. If kept outside, they should have a draft-free shelter large enough to turn around in, yet small enough to retain body heat. Use a layer of straw to help insulate against the cold. Check your dog's water often to make sure the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal.
3. Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice. Dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than any other season so remember to keep ID tags on your dog.
4. Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. He can ingest salt or antifreeze while licking his paws, and his paw pads may bleed from snow or encrusted ice. Consider using pet-friendly ice melts instead of salt or other chemicals.
5. Never shave your dog down to the skin in the winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. For a short-haired breed, consider getting him a coat or sweater.

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6. Never leave a cat or dog alone in a car, which can act as a refrigerator, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
7. If your dog spends time engaged in outdoor activities, increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him in shape.
8. Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle.
9. Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts.
10. During cold and flu season, make sure all prescriptions and over-the-counter medications are out of your pet's reach.

For more information on keeping your pets safe this winter, contact Susan Denk, Des Moines County Humane Society board member, at 319-671-0147.

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