

Cold Weather Safety Tips for Your Pets

The Saginaw Animal Services Division reminds you of the following steps to keep your pets safe during the winter months.

KEEP PETS SHELTERED:

Keep pets inside with you and your family. This is the best way to ensure your pet is protected during the cold of winter. Dogs and cats should not be outdoors, except for brief periods to use the restroom or go for a walk. If your dog is outdoors much of the day for any reason, they must be protected by a dry, draft-free shelter that is large enough to allow them to move comfortably, but small enough to hold in body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches from the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic and should face south as to protect against strong northern cold fronts.

Pets who spend a lot of time outdoors need more food in the winter because keeping warm depletes energy. Routinely check your pet's water dish to make certain water is fresh and unfrozen.

BUNDLE UP:

No matter what the temperature is, wind chill can threaten a pet's life. Exposed skin on noses, ears and paw pads are at risk for frostbite and hypothermia during extreme cold snaps. For this reason, short-haired dogs often feel more comfortable wearing a sweater---even during short walks.

REMOVE COMMON POISONS:

Antifreeze is a deadly poison, but it has a sweet taste that may attract animals and children. Wipe up any spills immediately and keep it, like all household chemicals, out of reach. Coolants and antifreeze made with propylene glycol are less toxic to pets, wildlife and family. If your pet ingests antifreeze, rock salt or any other potentially dangerous chemical, contact your veterinarian immediately.

PROTECT OUTDOOR ANIMALS

Cars are one of many hazards to small animals---warm engines in parked cars may attract stray cats and small wildlife, who may crawl up under the hood. To avoid injuring any hidden animals, bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your engine.

Remember, it is a crime to tether or chain unattended animals or to leave them outside without proper shelter and water. All dogs must be rabies vaccinated and registered with the city. If you observe animal cruelty or have questions on how to protect your pet from cold or inclement weather, please call the Saginaw Animal Services Division at 817-230-0460. Thank you for protecting the pets in our community.