

Mayor Bert Steinmann and The Ewing Township Health Department would like to help you Prepare Your Pets For Winter Weather

Just like people, pets need protection from winter weather. If an animal's coat gets wet, the fur loses much of its insulating ability. Your pet's toes, nose, and ears are even more vulnerable to cold temperatures. Whenever the temperature drops below freezing, protect your pets by providing:

- warm, dry, draft-free shelter
- plenty of food
- lots of water

Puppies and kittens as well as older dogs and cats should be kept inside, due to the lack of fat, metabolism, and the full fur coat needed to stay warm when temperatures fall. When it's cold or wet out, it's vital to keep younger, older, and sick pets indoors.

Monitor your pet closely when they are outside during winter weather conditions. Snow can freeze quickly on paws and cause problems. Salt spread on sidewalks can burn your pet's paws. Protective booties for dogs should fit snugly, but not too tight to avoid cutting off your dog's circulation.

Know the symptoms of Hypothermia in dogs and cats:

- violent shivering, followed by listlessness
- weak pulse
- lethargy
- muscle stiffness
- problems breathing
- lack of appetite
- rectal temperature below 98°F
- coma
- cardiac arrest



Hypothermia Treatment:

- Wrap your pet in a warm blanket or coat (you can warm blankets and coats in the dryer for a few minutes).
- Bring your pet into a warm room.
- Give your pet a solution of four teaspoons honey or sugar dissolved in warm water to drink. You can also put 1-2 teaspoons of corn syrup on the gums if your pet is too weak to drink. This provides an immediate energy boost.
- Place warm, towel-wrapped water bottles against your pet's abdomen or at her armpits and chest, then wrap her in a blanket. Do not use hair dryers, heating pads, or electric blankets to warm up a hypothermic pet as this may result in burns or cause surface blood vessels to dilate, which compromises circulation to vital organs.
- Call your veterinarian immediately.

Cold temperatures, snow, and ice can discourage both people and their pets from wanting to leave their cozy surroundings to go outside. The following are some tips to help get your dog outside to go potty in the winter:

- Keep a small area in the yard shoveled clear of snow. Then encourage your pet to use this spot. It helps if you shovel a path to this snow-free area.
- Buy booties. If your dog is bothered by the snow or ice touching its feet, put snow booties on your dog just before taking it outside.
- Wait by the door while your dog goes potty, and then let him back in as soon as he's done.
- Make an indoor potty. Use pet pee pads or indoor pee patches. Indoor pee patches consist of small swathes of fake grass on top of a broad, hollow tray into which urine collects each time a dog goes potty.

Some smaller dogs can also be litter box-trained; even mature dogs can be taught to use a box inside. This option requires patience as training your dog to use a litter box doesn't happen overnight.

Other safety considerations:

- Be aware that cats sometimes shelter under cars or in the engine compartment of cars. Banging on the hood of the car if your cat has access to it can prevent injury or death.
- Antifreeze can kill your pets. Cats in particular can die from ingesting very small amounts of antifreeze, such as from walking through a leak and then licking their paws. Make sure your car is not leaking antifreeze, and make sure all antifreeze containers are tightly closed and put away on a high shelf.
- Keep your pet safe during the holidays.
- Keep these numbers posted in an easy-to-find location in case of emergencies:
 - Your veterinarian's phone number
 - 24/7 emergency veterinary clinic
 - New Jersey Poison Center: 800-222-1222
 - ASPCA Poison Control Hotline: 1-888-426-4435 (A fee may apply.)

To keep your pets safe during the holidays, here are some additional tips from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMA)*:

Food: Keep people food away from pets. The following foods are especially dangerous for pets:

- **Chocolate** is toxic to dogs and cats. Consider all chocolate off limits for pets.
- **Other sweets and baked goods** should be kept out of reach. Not only are they often too rich for pets; an artificial sweetener often found in baked goods, candy and chewing gum, xylitol, has been linked to liver failure and death in dogs.
- **Turkey and turkey skin** – sometimes even in small amounts – can cause pancreatitis in pets.



- **Table scraps** – including gravy and meat fat can be especially fattening and hard for animals to digest and can cause pancreatitis. Onions, raisins and grapes are poisonous to pets. Yeast dough can cause problems for pets, including painful gas and potentially dangerous bloating.
- **Clear the food** from your table, counters and serving areas when you are done using them – and make sure the trash gets put where your pet can't reach it. Dispose of carcasses and bones – and anything used to wrap or tie the meat, such as strings, bags and packaging – in a covered, tightly secured trash bag placed in a closed trash container outdoors (or behind a closed, locked door).

If you believe your pet has been poisoned or eaten something it shouldn't have, call your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency clinic immediately. You may also call the New Jersey Poison Center at: **800-222-1222** or the ASPCA Poison Control Hotline: 1-888-426-4435. Signs of pet distress include: sudden changes in behavior, depression, pain, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Decorating:

- **Christmas trees** can tip over if pets climb on them or try to play with the lights and ornaments. Consider tying your tree to the ceiling to secure it.
- **Water additives for Christmas trees** can be hazardous to your pets. Do not add aspirin, sugar, or anything to the tree water if you have pets in the house.
- **Ornaments** can cause hazards for pets. Broken ornaments can cause injuries, and ingested ornaments can cause intestinal blockage or even toxicity. Keep any homemade ornaments, particularly those made from salt-dough or other food-based materials, out of reach of pets.
- **Tinsel and other holiday decorations** also can be tempting for pets to eat. Consuming them can cause intestinal blockages, sometimes requiring surgery.
- **Electric lights** can cause burns when a curious pet chews the cords.
- **Flowers and festive plants** can result in an emergency veterinary visit if your pet gets hold of them. Amaryllis, mistletoe, balsam, pine, poinsettias, cedar, and holly are among the common holiday plants that can be dangerous and even poisonous to pets who decide to eat them.
- **Candles** are attractive to pets. Never leave a pet alone with a lit candle; it could result in a fire.
- **Potpourris** should be kept out of reach of inquisitive pets. Liquid potpourris pose risks because they contain essential oils and detergents that can severely damage your pet's mouth, eyes and skin. Solid potpourris could cause problems if eaten.



*Adapted from: <https://pets.webmd.com> and the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMA).