



Alabama Veterinary Medical Association

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Protecting People, Pets and Livestock - Yesterday, Today and Always.

PRESS RELEASE

Beware of Cold Weather Dangers for Pets

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association wants to remind pet owners to be prepared to protect their pets against the severe cold. As the cold weather sets in, we need to think about our pets and how they will be affected by the change in temperature. Pet owners should always keep an eye on the forecast so we are aware of falling temperatures and can plan accordingly. Below are a few tips to help ensure our pets will be safe when the cold weather arrives.

- 1) Although some pets are conditioned to cold weather, veterinary experts agree that you should bring outdoor pets indoors if the temperature drops below 20 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 2) Puppies, kittens, and short haired pets should come inside anytime the temperature goes below 40 degrees.
- 3) For pets with long hair, proper grooming is essential to help them maintain a layer of warming air within their coat. Pets who are heavily matted cannot keep themselves as warm.
- 4) If your pet must stay outdoors, be sure to provide shelter for your pet. A good "house" will have three enclosed sides, will be elevated off the ground, and will contain generous amounts of bedding such as straw or hay.
- 5) In cold weather, bigger is not always better. A house just big enough for your pet will warm up faster and retain heat better than something that is too big.
- 6) Your pet will need access to fresh water that isn't frozen. Use heated water bowls and replenish them frequently.
- 7) Antifreeze is a common and deadly pet poisoning during colder months. If you suspect your pet has consumed any antifreeze at all, you must contact your veterinarian immediately!
- 8) Antifreeze has a sweet taste to pets, so they will readily lap up any spilled material. If you spill antifreeze, dilute the area well with water and sweep excess water into a rocky or sandy area. Cover area with soil to keep pets from licking at the rocks.
- 9) Cats love to warm up underneath car hoods. If your car is kept outdoors, or if cats have access to your garage, be sure to pound on the hood of the car prior to starting it. Many cats are killed or injured grievously by fan belts and moving engine parts.
- 10) Pets should not be left alone in vehicles due to the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning or hypothermia.
- 11) Our pets suffer from frostbite and hypothermia just like we do. Consider keeping dogs on a leash when they go outside. Many curious dogs off leash will explore "frozen" retention ponds, lakes or streams and fall through the ice into frigid water.
- 12) Older pets may suffer more from arthritis during these months. Ask your veterinarian about ways to help keep your senior pet comfortable during the winter.
- 13) Monitor all pets around wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and space heaters. These can cause severe burns!
- 14) This is a great time of year to see your veterinarian about a "winter check up" for your pet. Their advice and expertise can help keep your pet safe and warm!

Founded in 1907, The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association is comprised of approximately 725 veterinarians from around the state, all committed to protecting People, Pets and Livestock – Yesterday, Today and Always.

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