

Br-r-r-r! It's Cold Outside

Pets get cold, too. Here are some reminders about keeping your pet warm, happy and healthy during the cold and often wet winter months. These tips are from www.hsus.org and www.aspca.org.

- Don't leave dogs outside when the temperature drops. Most dogs and all cats are safer indoors, except when taken out for exercise. Regardless of the season, shorthaired, very young or old dogs and *all* cats should never be left outside without supervision. Short-coated dogs may feel more comfortable wearing a sweater during walks.
- Puppies may be difficult to train in the winter. They are more sensitive to cold than adult dogs. Consider paper-training it or using puppy pads until the weather moderates.
- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially in a snowstorm. Dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost.
- Garages don't protect pets. Every year in Hays, several pets, especially cats, freeze to death in unheated garages.
- No matter what the temperature, wind chill can threaten a pet's life—another reason to keep pets inside. But, if your dog is an outdoor dog, it must be protected by a dry, draft-free doghouse that is large enough to allow the dog to sit and lie down comfortably, but small enough to hold in its body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The house should be turned to face away from the wind, and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or plastic.
- 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 the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal. When the temperature is low, your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to metal.
- Never leave a cat or dog alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
- Warm engines in parked cars attract cats and small wildlife, who may crawl up under the hood. To avoid injuring any animals, bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your engine.
- The salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can irritate the pads of your pet's feet. Wipe the feet with a damp towel before your pet licks them and irritates its mouth.
- Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs or cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle. Consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.