



## Cold Weather

As temperatures fall, everyone needs some extra care and protection. This includes our furry friends. Make your dog's winter as comfortable as possible with these helpful tips:

**Adequate Shelter:** While I discourage owners from keeping dogs exclusively outdoors, I realize some people do. Dogs that spend most of the day outside must have appropriate shelter to keep out of wind and precipitation. Even dogs with thick fur can freeze to death. Also be sure to provide plenty of fresh, not frozen, water. Snow and ice put dogs at risk of hypothermia. Be aware that each county has codes specifying minimum restraints, shelter, protection and care for dogs (and other pets) punishable by fines or even jail time. If you are not familiar with the laws in your area, contact your local Animal Control, ASPCA or Humane Society.

**Increase Exercise:** When weather is relatively mild, walk your dog more frequently. Exercise with boost their metabolism, as well as yours, keeping you both warmer, longer. This is also the best way to alleviate stress! In extreme weather, play some fun indoor games together like Hide-and-Seek.

**Watch The Feet:** Salts and chemicals on sidewalks and streets can irritate paws. After an outing, wash off their feet, and any other effected areas, with a warm wet cloth. Dogs walking in snowy areas may get large ice balls between their pads, causing the dog to limp. Be sure to keep ice clear from this area. For dogs that have a lot of hair between the pads, keeping the hair trimmed will help reduce ice ball formation. Dog boots are also helpful if your will tolerate wearing them.

**Coats:** Many dog breeds' fur is not made for wintry weather and some are more sensitive to precipitation. Using an appropriate coat keeps them warmer and drier so you can still get out. Select function over fashion. Look for coats that go on and off easily and allow comfortable movement. Remember to never leave a dog unattended in any kind of "clothing".

**Antifreeze:** We can't be reminded enough...keep pets away from antifreeze. Antifreeze is lethal if ingested. Thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.

**Keep The Leash On:** According to the ASPCA "Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm—dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure yours always wears ID tags." Keeping your dog leashed also allows you to keep them away from potentially harmful substances.

**Car Trips:** Do NOT leave your dog unattended in a car. When the ignition is off, cold air gets trapped in a car like a refrigerator.

As always, have the numbers of your veterinarian and local animal emergency hospital readily available. With a few extra precautions you can make the winter season enjoyable for you and your four-legged friend.