

ASPCA Offers Tips to Keep Dogs Warm, Safe

National animal welfare organization reminds dog owners that their pet may also be feeling the chill this winter

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The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reminds owners that their dogs are also susceptible to the cold climate change. In addition to being vulnerable to the cold weather, many wintertime household products can be harmful to dogs.

The ASPCA offers tips to help dogs stay healthy and safe until spring: Make sure your dog's outdoor areas are well sheltered from the cold and wind. If possible, keep your dog inside during especially cold spells and inclement weather. When taking your dog outside for exercise or play, keep her warm with a canine sweater or jacket. If she plays off-leash in a snowy area, keep her in sight at all times. Snow makes it difficult for dogs to scent their way back to you and they may become lost or confused. Dogs still need to drink plenty of water during winter. If your dog's water bowl is kept outside, make sure the water hasn't frozen. Also, use caution when leaving your dog's food outside, as wild animals may wander onto your property to graze if their usual food supply is suffering a shortage. Be on the lookout for any antifreeze or engine coolant spills and keep potentially harmful chemicals in clearly marked, sealed containers out of your dog's reach. Ice melts, used to rid slippery sidewalks, roadways and driveways of ice and snow, contain ingredients such as calcium chloride and sodium chloride (table salt) that can irritate animal paws or skin. If a dog ingests this, depending on the amount, it can potentially produce a variety of effects such as drooling, vomiting, diarrhea and, in severe cases, cardiac abnormalities, seizures, coma and even death. Contact your veterinarian if you think your dog may have accidentally ingested any harmful ingredients.