

## PROPER SHELTER

It is very important for pets to have adequate shelter during the winter months. Cats and most small dogs should be kept inside during the winter months. Large dogs can survive outside if they have adequate shelter.

The shelter should be large enough for the dog to move around, but it shouldn't be more than three times the size of the dog. Dog houses that are too large are difficult to keep warm with the dog's body heat.

It's also important for the shelter to be dry. Elevating the dog house will help keep the floor dry. Straw is one of the best bedding materials as the dog can burrow into it and it stays dry, unlike a blanket that can turn into an icicle once it gets wet. A flap over the entrance of the shelter helps keep the dog warm.

If your garage is insulated or heated you can install a dog door and let your dog sleep with a blanket. If your garage isn't insulated you should include a box or some shelter similar to a dog house for warmth.



Keokuk Animal Services Facility  
Hours: Monday through Friday,  
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KEOKUK ANIMAL  
SERVICES

WINTER PET  
CARE



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KEOKUK ANIMAL SERVICES

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## WHEN THE TEMPERATURE FALLS BELOW FREEZING, YOUR PETS WILL NEED EXTRA CARE.

**The following list provides you with some things to keep in mind during the winter season. Following these guidelines will help you keep your pets happy and healthy during freezing weather.**

**Anti-freeze** – Animals like the taste of anti-freeze and will lick up spills and leaks in the garage. Anti-freeze is poisonous to your pet, so be sure to clean up all leaks and spills thoroughly.

**Beware of cats under your car** – During the cold weather, cats may seek warm shelter under your car. They like to crawl up by the engine where it's warm. Before starting your car, make sure there aren't any cats under your engine by lifting the hood of your car, honking your horn, or by slapping the hood hard enough to frighten the cat out. If you start the car with a cat under the engine, it could get caught in the fan and become seriously injured.

**Frostbite** – Even though pets have a coat of fur to protect them, they can still get frostbite. Cats and small dogs should be kept indoors during freezing weather. It's still important to make sure your pet gets exercise by going on walks, but at this time of the year the walks should be shortened.

**Rock salt & de-icers** – These ice-melting products will irritate a pet's paws. Before going out onto sidewalks that may have these products on them, you may want to rub a little baby oil on the pads of the paws and sprinkle baby powder on them. This will help protect your pet's paws from becoming sore. When you come back from being outside, be sure to rinse off your pet's paws.

**Diet** – The change of your pet's metabolism during cold weather demands different eating patterns. If your pet is staying outdoors, it will need more calories to help it produce enough body heat to keep itself warm. If your pet is staying indoors during this time, it may need fewer calories because of its more relaxed lifestyle. You will want to check with your veterinarian before making drastic changes in your pet's diet.

**Water** – If your pet stays outdoors during the winter months, be sure that your pet's water supply doesn't become frozen. Water is very important to the survival of pets. If needed, change the water frequently throughout the day.

**Toenails** – If your pet is accustomed to being outside a lot but is indoors during the winter, it may have a problem with its toenails growing longer than usual. This is because it isn't walking on the hard, rough surfaces outside that wear them down. You may need to clip your pet's toenails more often.

**Dandruff** – The harsh winter weather can cause your pet's skin to become dry and develop dandruff. To control this problem, try brushing your pet frequently. This will get rid of some of the dead skin.

**Taking a little more time to care for your pet can save your pet's life and prevent an unexpected trip to the veterinarian.**



## HOLIDAY HAZARDS

**Secure your Christmas tree** – During the Christmas season, some people don't secure their Christmas trees very well. Many cats like to climb the trees, which usually results in the tree falling over. Trees may also fall over from large dogs bumping into them. To prevent this from happening, you may want to secure the top of the tree by tying a rope to it and attaching it to the ceiling or the wall.

**Holiday plants** – Many of the plants used to decorate your home during the holiday season are poisonous to pets when eaten. Be sure to keep plants such as mistletoe, poinsettias, and holly out of your pet's reach.

**Ornaments** – Many ornaments and decorations can be bad for your pet. Tree ornaments can break and cut your pet. Icicles, yarn, ribbon, and angel hair can get caught in your pet's mouth and possibly suffocate it if it tries to swallow them. Keep these types of decorations away from your pet.

**Candy & chocolate** – Giving too much candy to your pet can give it an upset stomach. Too much chocolate could be fatal for your pet. This is because chocolate contains theobromine, a chemical which is toxic to pets.

**Electric cords** – Another item to keep away from your pet is electric cords. Due to the many holiday decorations and Christmas lights, there may be more exposed electric cords in your home. Many puppies and kittens will chew on them and could electrocute themselves.

**Pine needles** – As Christmas trees begin to dry out, their needles fall off. Take care your pet does not eat these needles as they could puncture its intestines.