



PET PEEVES

Make Sure Your Pets Can Weather The Cold

(NAPSA)—While many people assume pets enjoy the cold weather, even the hardiest dogs and cats can be at risk when temperatures dip below freezing. Fortunately, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) offers these tips to keep your pets healthy:

- Not all dog breeds are robust in low temperatures. For example, huskies were bred for icy climates and are more naturally winterized than larger, short-hair breeds such as Great Danes. Old and young dogs are also more vulnerable. When necessary, consider using dog coats and boots to help keep animals warm. Boots can help prevent ice from caking on dog paws—often in the hair between a dog's toes—which can cause pain and injury.

- Be very careful about letting any cat outside during the winter, as they could get disoriented and end up hiding where only the icy wind can find them. Lost cats have been known to seek warmth atop an auto engine only to be maimed or killed when it's started the next morning.

- Road salt can be severely irritating to your dog's footpads, drying them to the point that paws split open and bleed. Try to keep your dog off salt-based street and sidewalk clearing products and consider using a pet-friendly alternative to salt on your property—it'll do less damage to your plants as well.

- Clean your dog's paws and fur after a walk, because dogs will lick off road salt and it can cause gastrointestinal problems.



Veterinarians advise pet owners to keep their animals warm in rough weather.

- Keep an eye on any dogs running in the snow or keep them on the leash, because dogs sometimes lose familiar scents in the snow and ice and become lost—a potential tragedy on an icy day.

- For outdoor dogs, consider letting them inside your home on extremely cold days. If this is impossible, make sure there is a weatherproof shelter for them, at the very least a doghouse out of the wind with a door and warm bedding materials.

- Keeping warm requires extra energy for any animal exposed to winter cold. If you must keep your animals outdoors, make sure you feed them nutritious, vitamin-rich food and give them plenty of water so they can maintain a healthy coat and weight against frigid temperatures.

For more information on this and other pet issues, contact the AVMA at www.avma.org.