



Animal Protection of New Mexico

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Bring Your Animals Inside! Animals Left Out in Extreme Temperatures May Die

Winter is here, and no one feels the chill more than animals who are left outside. Dogs in particular are social creatures who enjoy companionship with their human pack. Citizens should assure animals are warm this season by keeping them indoors as much as possible. With temperatures dropping to the teens or lower, coupled with wind chill factors, animals left outside without adequate shelter and insulation may die. When it is not possible to keep companion animals inside, APNM strongly encourages people to consider the following:

It's a common misconception that dogs and cats won't get cold because of their fur. If you are cold, your companion animal is cold. Most domestic animals are not well equipped for cold weather and can easily be susceptible to frost bite and hypothermia.

Dogs can be particularly vulnerable. Toy breeds and shorthaired dogs do not conserve body heat well and can quickly succumb to hypothermia. Breeds with short hair or fine coats are often victims of frostbite. Elderly dogs and puppies often cannot adequately control body temperatures. Arthritic dogs are much more susceptible in cold weather. The most susceptible areas of the body to frostbite are the tips of ears, scrotum and the tail.

Be on the lookout for signs of hypothermia in animals, which include uncontrollable shivering followed by abrupt stillness, decreased heart beat and weak pulse, stiff muscles, lack of coordination and pale or blue gums.

WINTERIZE YOUR ANIMAL'S SHELTER AND ENVIRONMENT

A shelter should be tall enough for a dog or cat to sit upright and large enough to be able to turn around. Any smaller enclosure will cramp them. Any larger will prevent them from retaining body heat. If the shelter is not conventionally insulated or does not have a heater, straw makes an excellent and inexpensive insulated bedding. It retains heat and evaporates moisture. (Do not use hay as it does not have the same insulating value that straw does). Do not use fabric blankets or bedding. Once wet, it will ice over when the temperature drops at night, becoming wet again with your animal's body heat. Check the straw periodically for cleanliness and moisture and replace with fresh straw as needed. Another tip is to orient the shelter's entrance to face south to southeast to help protect the interior from wind, rain and snow and maximize solar gain. If the opening is uncovered, consider attaching a thick piece of rubber, doormat, or carpet scrap, cut to size to block the wind, rain and snow. Make sure the shelter is as airtight as possible. Consider using caulking and/or sealants on the outside. The shelter should be elevated a few inches off the ground so it

doesn't become waterlogged from rain and snow that accumulate. Inexpensive weatherproof heat mats can also be used. They provide gentle warmth and come with chew-proof electric cords.

Bernalillo County / City of Albuquerque Straw Assistance Program

For all residents of Bernalillo County and the City of Albuquerque, free straw for bedding is available through a partnership among Animal Protection of New Mexico, The City of Albuquerque's Animal Welfare Department and the Bernalillo County Department of Animal Control and Protection. Straw may be picked up at the city shelters. The East Side shelter is located at 8920 Lomas Blvd. NE. (Dial 311 for assistance). The West Side Shelter is located at 11800 Sunset Gardens SW. (Dial 311 for assistance). Residents of unincorporated Bernalillo County may pick up straw at the Bernalillo County Department of Animal Control and Welfare. The address is 1136 Gatewood SW (Telephone 505-260-7450.) Please call each location for hours.

MORE WINTER TIPS

Check your companion animal's water bowl frequently for freezing. Consider purchasing a heater, or a plug-in water bowl with a built in heater. Glass and china dishes will easily crack and break when the water freezes.

Don't leave an animal in a closed car in the winter. The unheated car can trap cold and become just as deadly as a hot car in the summer.

Store anti-freeze in a secure location away from any animal or child's reach. Even though New Mexico law requires bitter antifreeze to be sold in the state, residents could still be using antifreeze without a bittering agent that may be sold in another state. Animals and children are attracted by the sweet taste of traditional antifreeze, but it is a highly poisonous substance. Be aware if your animal has walked on salted or de-iced surfaces. If they have, they may lick their paws and ingest toxins. Rinse their paws in warm water after walking outside. Do this also if ice balls have formed between their toes and pads from walking in snow.

Finally, be aware that cats and wildlife left outside will seek out the warmth and protection of a car's engine. Bang on the hood or honk the horn before starting the engine and driving off.

REPORT ANIMAL CRUELTY

If New Mexico citizens observe animals being left outside in cold weather, winter conditions, please contact either the APNM Animal Cruelty Hotline at (505) 265-2322, ext. 29, or the Attorney General's Animal Cruelty Task Force Hotline at (505) 506-4000.

APNM's mission is to advocate the rights of animals by effecting systemic change, resulting in the humane treatment of all animals.

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