



## Environment

Prince George's County, Maryland

### When It's Cold Outside, Pets Get Cold Too!

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*Follow these 'pawtection' tips to keep your pet safe in cold weather*

**LARGO, MD** – Can't stand being outside in the cold temperatures? Imagine how your pet feels. When frigid air hits, the Prince George's County Animal Management Division reminds pet owners that if it's too cold for you to be outside, it's too cold for your pets and advises owners to keep their animals indoors and to closely monitor their exposure to winter elements. But if your pet must stay outdoors, County law requires you to provide the following protection:

- A dog house of appropriate size that is dry, draft free and elevated off the ground.
- A wind flap attached to the doghouse to keep cold air out and warm air in.
- Non-absorbent bedding like straw or wood shavings to help keep the dog warm.
- Fresh drinking water; routinely check your pet's drinking water to make sure it is not frozen and use a secured container to prevent tipping.

Other cold weather safety tips pet owners should consider include:

- Keep kittens and puppies under six months, and small or short-haired dogs inside.
- Consider indoor house training for puppies as they do not handle cold temperatures like their mature counterparts.
- Consider dressing your pet in specially made coats or sweaters; some pet owners also use booties or other shoe like foot protection.
- Increase your pets protein to help keep the pets fur healthy.
- Don't let your dog off its leash in the snow or ice; they can easily become lost and snow and ice can be dangerous when they are running loose.
- Make sure your pet always wears ID tags and is properly licensed and microchipped.
- Wipe or dry your pet's feet, legs and stomach when they come in out of the sleet, snow or ice.
- Never leave your pet in a closed car in the winter. Cold temperatures can quickly create a freezer-like environment in a car putting your pet at risk of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep with a blanket or pillow, away from drafts.
- Check your car. Outdoor and feral cats seek shelter from the cold under car hoods, in wheel wells and underneath cars. Knock on the hood and honk the horn to remove any cats nestled in these areas.

If you're looking for a dog or cat to keep warm in your home, contact the Animal Services Facility at (301) 780-7200 or visit [www.princegeorgespets4us.com](http://www.princegeorgespets4us.com).

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