

Cold Weather Pet Care



If it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep your animals inside.

If left outdoors, pets can be susceptible to frostbite, hypothermia, become disoriented, or lost. Don't leave pets alone in a car during cold weather, either. Cars can act as refrigerators that hold in the cold and cause animals to freeze to death.

To help prevent cold weather dangers from affecting your pet's health, follow this advice from the [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#) (ASPCA):

- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. If your dog is short-haired, consider getting him a coat, sweater with a high collar, or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly.
- Winter walks can become downright dangerous if chemicals from ice-melting agents are licked off of bare paws. Bring a towel on long walks to clean off stinging, irritated paws. After each walk, wash and dry your pet's feet and stomach to remove ice, salt, and chemicals—and check for cracks in paw pads or redness between the toes.
- Massaging petroleum jelly or other paw protectants into paw pads before going outside can help protect from salt and chemical agents. Booties provide even more coverage.
- Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy pet bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.

For more information, visit the [ASPCA's Cold Weather Safety Tips](#) page, the [Humane Society](#) or [Best Friends Animal Society](#), and find [Cold Weather Guidelines for Large Animals and Livestock](#) on Ready.gov.

Recognize Frostbite



Don't let Jack Frost nip at your nose. Protect yourself from frostbite with information from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

Frostbite is an injury caused by freezing. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body and severe cases can lead to amputation. The risk of frostbite is increased in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

At the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area, get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin—frostbite may be beginning. Any of the following signs may indicate frostbite:

- White or grayish-yellow skin area.
- Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy.
- Numbness.

As soon as you detect the symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care. If immediate medical care is not available, proceed as follows:

- Get into a warm room as soon as possible.
- Don't rub the frostbitten area with snow or massage it at all. This can cause more damage.
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes as this increases the damage.
- Immerse the affected area in warm—not hot—water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body).
- Don't use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can be easily burned.

Winterize Your Car



Don't hit the road without a jack or until your car is ready for winter weather.

There are specific emergency items to store in your car during the winter.

There are also maintenance checks to keep you safe, your vehicle warm and your engine running.

Follow these tips and find more winter preparedness information at Ready.gov.

Check or have a mechanic check items, such as:

- Antifreeze levels - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Battery and ignition system - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- Exhaust system - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
- Heater and defroster - ensure they work properly.
- Lights and flashing hazard lights - check for serviceability.
- Windshield wiper equipment - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- Install good winter tires - Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.

Add winter items to the emergency kits in your vehicles:

- A shovel.
- Windshield scraper and small broom.
- Water.
- Snack food.
- Extra hats, socks and mittens.
- Necessary medications.
- Blanket(s).
- Tow chain or rope.
- Road salt and sand.

Additional winter preparedness tips are available to keep your family safe and warm all winter long. To view more, check out the America's PrepareAthon! [How to Prepare for a Winter Storm](#) guide.