

MEDIA RELEASE

Winter Weather Pet Safety Reminders

Charlotte – NC - January 14, 2022: The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care & Control Division (AC&C) reminds pet owners that cold temperatures and winter precipitation is forecasted over the weekend. Below freezing temperatures are expected in our region and it's important you take precautions to keep your pets warm, dry, and safe. The best option is to bring them indoors!



The best option is to bring outdoor pets inside!

If you are unable to bring animals into your heated living space, but have a garage or basement, remember if they are not heated the temperature inside these areas will likely fall below freezing so proper bedding or straw needs to be used in these areas as well. When taking dogs out for bathroom breaks remember to consider the breed and the type of fur coat they have, some dogs cannot tolerate the cold temperatures for an extended period of time. Dog coats are a good option for these breeds. When winter weather occurs always make sure to inspect the dog's paws when they come inside and if they have walked on surfaces that may have been treated for ice, be sure to clean their paws thoroughly with warm water and a mild soap. When shopping for ice melt, choose a pet friendly variety.

AC&C has a supply of straw available to Char-Meck pet owners who need assistance preparing their outside pets for winter. If you can't bring them inside, please prepare their shelter with straw. Visit the shelter at 8315 Byrum Drive – Charlotte, NC 28217 to pick up straw, It's self-serve in the trailer in the front parking lot.

Safety tips to keep in mind during the winter months:

Pets must build up a thicker coat and get their footpads toughened for snow and ice. Also, pets that get too cold could develop hypothermia or even frostbite. Animals that stay well-hydrated are less likely to be affected. That is why it is especially important to make sure if your pet has an outside water bowl, it does not freeze. Break up any ice that forms in the bowl and change the water frequently.

Animals also like the taste of antifreeze, but it is a deadly poison. The most likely source of antifreeze is from radiator drainage in your garage or driveway. If your car leaks any antifreeze, immediately wash it away with water.

Specific advice related to different pets:

OUTDOOR PETS – PROPER SHELTER

If your pet spends a lot of time outdoors, let him get acclimated gradually to dropping temperatures. Outdoor pets need a sheltered place that is well-bedded with DRY straw, shavings or blanket strips that trap warm air. Remember, animals drag a lot of moisture into their bedding areas from snow, rain and mud. Check their bedding often and change it whenever it is wet. Also, outdoor pets need more food during the winter because extra calories allow them to produce more body heat. Please consult your local animal ordinances to make sure you are complaint with the law in caring for your outdoor pet. The recommendation is to bring the pet inside during cold temperatures.

CATS

Cats prefer to spend the winter indoors, but if your cat prefers to stay outside, be very cautious. Cats left outdoors have a particular hazard because they often crawl into car engines to stay warm. When the engine is started, the cat can be seriously injured or killed by the fan blade or belt.

PUPPIES

Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you may opt to paper-train him inside.

DOG FOOT (PAW) CARE

Make sure to wipe off dog's legs, feet and stomach when they come in out of the snow or ice. They can ingest salt, antifreeze or other dangerous chemicals if they lick their paws. Be sure to inspect the pads of their feet for encrusted ice as they may crack from the cold. Many dogs need boots in cold weather.

DOG OUTERWEAR

Dogs with very short coats have the least tolerance for cold. Extremely short-coated breeds include Greyhounds, Dobermans, Boxers, Boston Terriers, Chihuahuas, Miniature Pinschers and Miniature Dachshunds. These breeds should not go outside without a sweater or a coat. Dogs should not be shaved down to the skin during the winter months. If you bathe your dog during the winter, be sure to dry them completely before they go outside.

GRASS FOR POTTY BREAKS

If your dog is picky about going to the bathroom in the snow, plan ahead! Take a large piece of black plastic or large piece of cardboard. (a vinyl shower liner works great and are inexpensive) and lay it down in a grassy area that is easy to access from your door before the expected precipitation starts. Once the precipitation ends, carefully remove, or dig out the liner and you have a grass area for your dogs to relieve themselves.