

Keep Pets Safe during Dangerous Cold Snap

Written by Australian Business

HARRISBURG, Pa., Jan. 3, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- State officials are urging the public to take extra precautions to ensure the safety of their pets during a dangerous cold snap across much of the state over the next few days.

"While it's easy to think that dogs are immune to cold because of their fur, the fact is that more dogs perish in the winter than at any other time of the year," said Joel Hersh, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team (PASART.) "Some are better able to handle the cold than others, but taking a few simple precautions can ensure an enjoyable winter experience for both pets and their families."

PASART recommends these steps to help keep pets safe during cold temperatures:

- Never leave puppies, smaller dogs, older dogs or cats outdoors when the temperature falls below 40 degrees.
- If your dog or cat stays outside much of the time in the winter, be certain that they have a proper shelter raised several inches off the ground with a flap over the entry. Keep a fresh blanket, cedar shavings or straw to keep the pet warm. The shelter should be large enough that your pet can sit and stand, but small enough so the pet's body heat will be retained in the house.
- Use a plastic water bowl to ensure your pet's tongue does not get stuck to cold metal, and change the water often to keep it from freezing.
- Be sure to keep older or arthritic pets inside. Escort older dogs outside for toileting and use a leash if the yard has ice or snow. Older dogs can easily fall and seriously injure themselves.
- Be alert for signs of frostbite and injury. Dogs' ears, paws and tails are especially susceptible, and if you suspect frostbite, contact your veterinarian. If your dog plays on ice or hard, frozen dirt, check his paws for cuts and always wipe his feet after a walk in the snow to remove ice pellets and salt deposits.
- Use only pet-safe ice melt.
- Always be alert for signs of hypothermia such as shivering, lethargy, low heart rate and unresponsiveness.
- Never leave your dog inside a parked car. During the winter it can act as an icebox and trap cold air inside.

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The commonwealth's ReadyPA campaign encourages citizens to take three basic steps before an emergency occurs: Be Informed, Be Prepared, Be Involved. More detailed information, including downloadable emergency kit checklists and emergency plan templates, are available online at www.ReadyPA.org or by calling 1- 888-9-READY-PA.

The PA State Animal Response Team (PASART) is a private non-profit organization which receives the majority of its funding from the federal government through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). For more information regarding PASART, visit www.pasart.us

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SOURCE Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

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