

# Cold Weather Tips



Animal  
Care Centers  
of NYC

[www.nycacc.org](http://www.nycacc.org)

*Does your dog's ability to escape from the back yard have you convinced that he's nothing less than a "Hairy Houdini"? You seem comical at times, but every escape opens up the possibility of tragic consequences. If your dog is running loose, he's in danger of being hit by a car, injured in a fight with another dog, or hurt in any number of other ways. You're also liable for any damage or injury your dog may cause, and you may be required to pay a fine if he's picked up by an animal control agency. To prevent escapes, you'll need to find out how your dog is getting out of the yard and, more importantly, why he's so determined to get out.*

With the cold weather approaching, we urge pet owners to take extra precautions this winter to ensure the safety of their companion animals.

## Help keep your pet safe during the colder months by following these simple guidelines:

- Don't leave pets outdoors unsupervised when the temperature drops. Dogs and cats are safer indoors, except when taken out for supervised exercise
- No matter what the temperature, wind chill can threaten a pet's life. A dog or cat is happiest and healthiest when kept indoors.
- If your dog spends significant time outdoors, however, he/she must be protected by a dry, draft-free doghouse that is large enough to allow the dog to sit and lie down comfortably, but small enough to hold in his/her body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The house should be turned to face away from the wind, and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.
- Regardless of the season, shorthaired, very young, or old dogs and all cats should never be left outside without supervision.
- Never leave your dog or cat alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
- Short-coated dogs may feel more comfortable wearing a sweater during walks. Make sure the sweater fits appropriately, is not restrictive and that your pet is comfortable putting it on and taking it off.
- Pets who spend a lot of time outdoors need more food in the winter because keeping warm depletes energy. Routinely check your pet's water dish to make certain the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal.
- Warm engines in parked cars attract cats and small wildlife, who may crawl up under the hood. To avoid injuring any hidden animals, lift your hood to check around the engine or bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your car.
- The salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can irritate the pads of your pet's feet and may be harmful if ingested. Wipe the feet with a damp towel before your pet licks them to remove snow packed between your pet's paws. Pet-friendly ice melts are available at many pet supply stores across the nation or online.
- Antifreeze is a deadly poison, but it has a sweet taste that can attract animals and children. Wipe up spills and store antifreeze (and all household chemicals) out of reach. If possible, it is better to use antifreeze-coolant made with propylene glycol, which is less toxic in small amounts than traditional ethylene glycol antifreeze.
- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice. Especially during a snowstorm, dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost.

- Never shave your dog down to a very short coat or to the skin in the winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to completely dry him before taking him out for a walk. For shorthaired breeds, consider getting him a coat or a sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.

The best prescription for winter's woes is to keep your dog or cat inside with you and your family. The happiest dogs are those who are taken out frequently for walks and exercise but kept inside the rest of the time. Dogs and cats are social animals who crave human companionship. Your animal companions deserve to live indoors with you and your family.



**Animal  
Care Centers  
of NYC**

[www.nycacc.org](http://www.nycacc.org)

To promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of pets and people in NYC.  
This article has been reprinted with permission from the HSUS.