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10 Tips to Help Winterize Your Pets

As the weather turns cold, it is important to consider how seasonal changes affect your pets. The following tips will keep your pets safe when the temperature dips.

- Keep pets inside as much as possible. Young pets, old pets and short-haired pets are more vulnerable to cold weather and should not be left outside unsupervised.
- If your pet has to be kept outside, provide shelter for it. Add straw for additional insulation from the cold and provide a snug, warm bed that does not sit directly on the ground.
- Provide your pet with extra food and water, in plastic bowls, when outside for extended periods of time.
- Ice-melting chemicals and salt can irritate and burn the pads of your pet's paws. Thoroughly wipe off your pet's paws once it has returned inside.
- Clip the long hair on the bottom of your dog's feet to prevent build up of ice balls that can be painful and difficult to remove.
- Trim nails regularly. It is difficult to maintain solid footing with long nails in icy conditions.
- Antifreeze is poisonous. Thoroughly clean up any spills and store household chemicals out of your pet's reach. Consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.
- Bang on the hood of your car before starting the engine. Cats and wildlife may seek warmth and climb into the engine.
- Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep. All pets, including small caged pets need to be kept warm and away from drafts.
- Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet has frostbite or hypothermia.

Following these winter-proofing tips will help keep your pets healthy, happy and safe during the cold winter months.

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