Cold Weather Hints for Pet Owners

As the weather turns cold, it is very important to consider how seasonal changes affect your pets. Outdoor pets can become victims of improper shelter, lack of fresh water, antifreeze poisoning, frostbite and even hypothermia.

Here are some tips to help your pets stay warm and healthy this winter:

1. Inspect pet paws regularly to check for cracked pads, broken nails or snow and ice damage.
2. Brush the coat regularly to distribute natural oils to the skin.
3. Provide winter paw protection, such as shoes or booties.
4. Inspect areas like ears, tail, scrotum where frostbite most frequently affects areas not covered by fur. (to treat frostbite, immerse the area in warm water for 15/20 minutes – never ever use HOT water!! Contact veterinarian.
5. Add straw to insulate doghouses.
   For outdoor cats, provide a snuggly warm bed that is not in direct contact with the ground.
6. Keep a lookout for any antifreeze leaks – antifreeze is deadly to all pets.
7. Use protective screens around fireplaces and supervise the area from pets getting near active fires.
8. Install carbon monoxide detectors for the safety of you and your pets.
9. Keeps temperature inside of home level. Pets are more sensitive to temperature changes than us.
10. Provide extra food, some pets appetites increase during winter.
11. Use sweaters, raincoats, hats, and any paw protections like booties or shoes.
12. Purchase heated water bowels for outdoor pets.
13. Consider heating pad or heated beds for pets during winter months.
14. Keep pets nails trimmed regularly, its very hard for pets to maintain solid footing with long nails in icy ground.

Hypothermia:

This occurs when a pet is exposed to very cold temperatures and windy conditions for an extended time. Symptoms may include shivering, low body temperature, stumbling, drowsiness and exhausted behavior.
To treat the pets body temperature needs to be raised. Surround the pet with warm water bottles and blankets. Try to get pet to drink warm liquids and call your veterinarian.