



Cold weather

When the weather outside is frightful we need to take care of our pets to make sure they are safe and well in the extreme conditions. Here are a few of our suggestions to make sure you can enjoy the winter time with your furry friends.

Dogs and cats:

- Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats, be sure to keep it well away from them.
- Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cosy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.
- Let winter coats grow or buy coats to cover up and keep out the cold.
- Never leave a dog or cat in a car in the cold. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
- Don't let your dog off the lead on ice or snow as it is harder for them to pick up scents on these surfaces and they can become lost.
- Make sure your pet has a tag and is microchipped in case they do get lost.
- During the winter, cats sometimes sleep under the bonnet of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are cats in your area, bang loudly on the car bonnet before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
- Ensure you completely dry your dog after going for a walk in rain or snow to avoid them catching a cold. It is also good to wipe their legs, feet and stomach to get rid of any nasty things like grit or ice getting stuck on them and causing pain. Pats can also ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws so it's best to keep them clean.
- Avoid frozen ponds when walking, they may not be strong enough for you or your dog's weight.
- Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs, and may be difficult to house-train during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you may opt to Paper-train them inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take them outdoors only to relieve themselves.

Horses:

- Horses are well adapted to cold weather but it is a good idea to ensure they have shelter from the wind and wet if they live outdoors.
- A rug that is not warm enough is worse than no rug at all. In cold weather, the hair coat stands up to trap additional warm air close to the body. A rug keeps the coat flat.
- When temperatures dip, the best heat source for your horse is extra hay.
- Riding outside in winter presents some additional challenges. Stay off icy patches, and remember that frozen ground, even if it's not icy, can be as hard as concrete. Don't go any faster than a walk unless there's a good cushion of snow on top and you know for sure there's no ice underneath.