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Tips for Winter

With winter coming, here are some tips to keep your pets safe and warm during the winter months:

- 1) Provide adequate shelter and warmth. Outside dogs should have a warm kennel or building to get out of the cold and wet weather. It should be insulated and have flooring that protects the animal from the cold and damp (wood, plastic or concrete flooring, heavily bedded with clean straw, or waterproof bedding). If necessary, a heat source like a heating board or heat lamp (red light is warmest) should be provided.
- 2) Check under the hood when starting your car if you have an outdoor cat. The warm engine block may be an enticing place to warm up. Cat legs and tails can easily become entangled in belts when the car is started.
- 3) Extra food may be required during the winter, since keeping warm burns extra calories.
- 4) Short haired dogs may need jackets, sweaters or fleecewear to protect them when they are outside walking or playing. Do not leave small dogs, young animals or geriatric animals outside for extended periods of time as they may suffer from frostbite or hypothermia. Older or arthritic animals may have difficulty walking on slippery surfaces so provide extra support as needed.
- 5) Take care to remove any snow or ice from the footpads of dogs and cats when they come inside, especially if the pets are walking on chemicals like rock salt, because licking their pads may cause salt intoxication.
- 6) Ensure clean, fresh water is accessible at all times.
- 7) Keep dogs and cats away from antifreeze and be sure to clean up any spills immediately. They are attracted to antifreeze because it tastes sweet, but it can be deadly even in small amounts.

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