

Beware of the Cold!

Although it may not seem like it when the weather is still hot and humid in November and we just celebrated Thanksgiving, the cold season in Florida is approaching, and we will soon be pulling out our sweaters and jackets. It is important to remember our pets during the winter season, as well. Even though you may believe that their fur coats are enough to keep warm, they often need a little more protection from colder weather and the elements. Sometimes our overnight temperatures can dip low enough to cause frost to develop. The days and nights of varying weather conditions that transition back and forth from warm to cold or from humid to dry affect both warm-blooded people and animals.

Chilling Health Risks

Some of the dangers of exposure to the elements during the winter months can include low body temperature, frostbite and exposure. All too often, cats and other small animals have been known to escape the cold by climbing into automobile engines for the warmth, tragically resulting in fan-motor wounds, burns and even fatalities when the car is started by an unsuspecting owner. It is not a bad idea to play it safe by knocking on the hood of your car or honking your horn before starting your vehicle on a cold morning.

Deathly Cold

Periods of long exposure outside without any protection from the elements also can be deadly to your pets. As you watch the news on the weather channel and keep your eye on the thermometer, please keep your pets in mind, too. For pets that are allowed to go outside, we need to be sure that they are back inside before closing up the house and going to sleep at night. There are some homes where the pets live outside day and night.

For these animals, providing a wind-sheltered environment is essential. Offering old blankets or towels for extra warmth is a good idea, as well, in the event that outside protection, such as a dog house or shelter, cannot be provided. Using your screen porch or garage as shelter from the cold weather would be safer than leaving them to face the elements alone. Even in garages or on porches, your pet would appreciate and benefit from a special area set aside from wind or drafts that is made more comfortable with blankets and towels. Pets are family members, too, and they depend on their owners for basic shelter and food. When the weather gets a little chilly, this is certainly truer than ever.