

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

In November, we had an article about “Winterizing Your Pets”. November wasn’t a very harsh month but now we are in the lower temps and more wintry conditions. Our pets are more at risk.

Chip and Lola, our two dogs, are out and in. in a much shorter time period. These are not dogs that are going to patiently wait while I put their boots on – nor will they keep them on. They just want to run and irritate the squirrels and come right back in the house. They are smaller dogs. Our neighbors ‘granddog’ Gus, loves a good nap in the snow and he is built for it.

It breaks my heart to see an animal tied outside without shelter. If you are aware of a family in need of shelter for their dog, please contact the Northwoods Humane Society. Through our outreach program we will assist them in getting the dog housing. You may also contact our area Animal Control Officers who we also work with in terms of providing assistance for owned pets.

The following article written by Nancy Kay, DVM published on “Spot Speaks” gives ten tips for winterizing our pets.

“Oh, the weather outside is frightful! Winter weather is rapidly approaching and you’ve likely begun layering your clothing and weatherproofing your car. When organizing for winter, don’t forget to think about your pets. They too are deserving of special treatment this time of year. Here are ten tips for keeping your pets cozy, comfortable, and healthy this winter:

1. Just as arthritis can be more problematic for us when the temperature drops, so too does this apply to our animals. If your best buddy appears stiff first thing in the morning or is more tentative when navigating stairs or jumping up and down off the furniture, I encourage you to contact your veterinarian. These days, there are so many beneficial treatment options for soothing arthritis discomfort. For your pet’s sake, make the effort to learn more about them.
2. When the temperature drops, outdoor kitties like to snuggle up against car engines for extra warmth. Be sure to provide plenty of notice before you start up your engine lest a “kitty squatter” sustain serious injury as a result of moving auto parts. Vocalize and tap the hood a few times. Better yet, lift the hood to alert any slumbering guests of your intentions.
3. Antifreeze is terribly toxic for dogs and cats. Even a few licks of the stuff can cause kidney failure and severe neurological symptoms, usually resulting in death. Unfortunately, most antifreeze products have a sweet flavor making them appealing to dogs. Cats are too discriminating to voluntarily taste the stuff, but should they step in antifreeze, they will ingest enough to be toxic during their grooming process. Please prevent your pets from having any access to antifreeze by checking under your vehicles for leaks and storing antifreeze containers in a safe place.
4. Wintertime is definitely dress-up time for dogs, when the clothing is functional rather than just adorable. Just like us, many dogs are more comfortable outside when wearing an extra layer. Smaller dogs in particular have difficulty maintaining a normal body temperature when exposed to freezing conditions. If the love of your canine life happens to be an arctic breed (Malamute, Husky, Samoyed), no need for canine clothing!
5. Regardless of season, all animals need access to water round-the-clock. If your pet is reliant on an outdoor water bowl, strategize a way to prevent the water from freezing. Water bowl heaters work well.

Additionally moving water is more resistant to freezing- consider creating a little “drinking fountain” for your pets.

6. Sure the weather is cold, but your dogs still need plenty of exercise for their physical as well as their psychological well being. Besides, there’s nothing quite like the feeling of relaxing by the fire with a content and tired dog at your side! If the weather is truly too inclement for both of you to be outdoors, look for an indoor dog park or consider doggie day care, assuming your dog enjoys such venues.

7. I’m all for hiking with dogs off leash, but in winter, be extra cautious around ponds and lakes for fear of thin ice. Not only is falling through the ice life threatening for dogs, it creates a situation that often becomes life threatening for the humans involved in the rescue operation.

8. Salt on sidewalks and roads and even ice that adheres to all of that fuzzy hair between your dog’s toes can create irritation and sores. Inspect and rinse your dog’s tootsies as needed.

9. I strongly encourage having dogs and cats live indoors. If your living situation absolutely prevents this, and there are no other viable alternatives, please provide your pet with an enclosed shelter that is warmed by a heating device and contains plenty of clean, dry bedding. Also, remember that your pet needs just as much attention from you in frigid temperatures as during the warmer seasons.

10. ‘Tis the time of year when we humans tend to overindulge, eating all kinds of things we shouldn’t. Don’t allow your pets to become a victim of this holiday spirit. In addition to adding unwanted and unhealthy pounds, eating rich and fatty foods predisposes them to gastrointestinal upset and pancreatitis either of which could land your four-legged family member in the hospital for several days (not to mention create some significant rug-cleaning expenses for you).

What steps do you take to ensure your pets will be happy and healthy during the winter?”

There are some things in life we can control. Caring and sharing with those that we love who are with us are two of these things. We can say I love you in many ways. Caring for our pets is a true way to say ‘I love you.’