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Friday August 14, 2009

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Puppies, small dogs, cats vulnerable to frigid temperatures: OSPCA



Regional News

January 14, 2009 12:40 PM

Amanda Persico, Staff Writer

As temperatures continue to plunge, the Ontario SPCA warns pet owners to shelter their pets from the extreme cold weather.

Cats, short-coated dogs and puppies are particularly vulnerable in cold temperatures to frostbite or hypothermia.

The Ontario SPCA recommends keeping cats indoors and taking dogs out for short periods, said Kristin Williams, provincial spokesperson for the Ontario SPCA.

"When temperatures fall below freezing it creates dangerous and potentially life-threatening conditions for animals left outside," Ms Williams said.

Consider slipping your short-coated dog or puppy into a comfortable dog sweater or coat as an extra layer of warmth.

Outdoor dogs must be provided with adequate insulated shelter and a constant supply of fresh water. Elderly dogs, puppies or sick dogs should not be housed outside for their well being.

"Ontario SPCA investigators will be on the alert for animals left without protection in intolerable conditions," said Ms Williams.

If you see an animal without shelter from the cold, or in distress, please contact your local Ontario SPCA Community, the Provincial Office at 1-888-668-7722, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), or police to make a report.

Tips for keeping your pet warm:

Limit time outdoors: Take your dog out for shorter walks. Don't let your dog off leash on ice or snow, especially during a snowstorm, as dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. Ensure your pet always has a warm place to sleep away from drafts and off the floor. A thick cozy dog or cat bed with a blanket or pillow is great.

Weather wear: Consider slipping your short-coated dog or puppy into a dog sweater or coat as an extra layer of warmth. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, the longer coat will provide more warmth. When bathing your dog during winter months, ensure he is completely dry before taking him outside.

Avoid car hazards: Never leave your cat or dog alone in a car during cold weather. Cars hold in the cold, acting like refrigerators, which could cause your dog to freeze to death. Also, be aware of cats seeking warmth under vehicle hoods. Knock on the hood or sound the horn before starting the engine. Antifreeze and brake fluids contain ethylene glycol, which tastes sweet, is deadly to animals.

Protect outdoor dogs: Outdoor dogs must be provided adequate shelter and a constant supply of fresh water. While the Ontario SPCA strongly recommends bringing your dog indoors, dogs that live outside require a dry, draft-free doghouse built of weatherproof materials with the door facing away from prevailing winds.

Take pet precautions: Use a damp towel to wipe your pet's paws and underside after being outside. Salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice on roads and sidewalks can irritate and burn your pet's sensitive paws and can cause injury if ingested. For more information visit, www.ontariospca.ca

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