

winter SAFE

Four smart strategies to help keep your furry family members warm, dry, and protected during chilly weather.

32

DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

When the temp dips to freezing or below, be aware of potential cold-weather issues like frostbite.



DRESS THEM RIGHT

Many dogs benefit from a cozy coat or sweater, but short-hair and/or small dogs definitely need one; they lose heat more easily. Booties are also a good idea because cold, ice, and salt can irritate, dry out, or even injure paws, says Jennifer Maniet, D.V.M., with Petplan pet insurance in Newtown Square, PA. Get your dog used to the booties by having her briefly pad around in them indoors for a few days before going outside.

CARE FOR PAWS

Wipe paws with a warm, damp washcloth after going outside. Also have the groomer trim tufts of fur between pads and nails to limit snow and ice buildup, says Shian Simms, D.V.M., chief of veterinary medicine at Bideawee in New York City.

PET-PROOF THE GARAGE

Antifreeze can kill dogs and cats, and regrettably they're

attracted to its sweet smell and taste, Simms says. Even a small amount can harm them. Clean up antifreeze spills ASAP, and if you suspect your pet has licked any (symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, stumbling), immediately take her to the vet hospital.

Also remember that cats have been known to crawl into car engines seeking warmth, so bang on the hood and honk the horn before starting your car.

On a related note, ask your vet to recommend a pet-safe ice-melt product to use on the driveway and sidewalk. Some can be toxic.

KEEP DOGS LEASHED

If your dog gets separated from you in snowy conditions, she can get lost because her usual smells are muted. Dogs can be difficult to see off-leash in the snow, especially if they're white. Another safety move: Clear a path through the snow so your dog can easily reach a potty spot. ■