



SCHENECTADY COUNTY SOCIETY FOR THE
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
P.O. Box 9516
NISKAYUNA, NEW YORK 12309
(518) 755-9517
INFO@SCHENECTADYSPCA.ORG



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ali Skinner, Director of Public Relations

press@schenectadyspca.org

(518) 640-1248 (Office)

(518) 755-2789 (Cell)

HOT DOG, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE! *Winter Weather Pet Safety Tips*

[Date] – Schenectady, NY – As the Capital Region digs out following the first winter storm of the season, the Schenectady County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SC SPCA) is taking the time to remind animal lovers about the importance of winter weather pet safety. While the winter months can be a fun time for our four-legged friends, pet owners may need to take special precautions to prevent animals from succumbing to the cold conditions and other hazards prevalent this time of year.

“First and foremost, fur only goes so far in protecting cats and dogs from the elements,” says SC SPCA Chief Mathew B. Tully. “If your dog lives outside, ensure that adequate shelter is provided to protect the animal from the wind, moisture and cold. Heated floor mats, non-electric warming beds and bedded straw are good options. Never use a heated lamp or other type of home heater, as it may cause a fire,” adds Tully.

Shorthaired, very young, or old dogs and all cats should never be left outside without supervision. Sweaters are available at most pet stores and should be considered for small or short-haired dogs while walking.

Other hazards associated with the winter months include antifreeze. “Cats and dogs are attracted to the sweet smell and taste of antifreeze,” says Tully. This chemical, used to cool automobile engines, is highly toxic and rapidly absorbed. Tully advises pet owner to consider using safe alternatives like ethylene glycol, also called propylene glycol. Warning signs that an animal has ingested antifreeze include stumbling, vomiting and depression. If your pet displays any of these symptoms, contact your veterinarian immediately.

As with humans, it's important to ensure your pet gets adequate exercise during the winter months. If your dog is having difficulty due to deep snow, slick or icy surfaces, shorten the exercise times. Also, check your pet's paws for ice balls and rinse feet to ensure that salt and other deicers don't remain on paws that are likely to be licked.

Finally, keep fresh water accessible at all times. Make sure water is not frozen. Heated pet bowls are available in stainless steel or plastic for pets that spend significant time outside or in a garage.

For more information about keeping your pet happy and healthy during the winter months or to speak with Mathew B. Tully, please contact Ali Skinner at (518) 640-1248 or at press@schenectadyspca.org.

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The Schenectady County SPCA strives to prevent animal cruelty by enforcing existing laws and advocating for animal welfare. We collaborate with local law enforcement to respond to all animal neglect and abuse complaints, initiate and complete thorough investigations, and arrest and prosecute violators of any animal welfare related laws. We endeavor to prevent and detect abuse by increasing public awareness through our Humane Education programs. For more information about the Society or to make a donation, please visit www.schenectadyspca.com.

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