

12 tips to make your dog safe during the Holidays season

By: Saro Boghozian

There are plenty of winter hazards out there, such as antifreeze and ice. Though some dog breeds (like Huskies and Malamutes) are better suited to cold weather, all dogs should have access to a warm shelter at all times. Here are some cold weather tips by Saro to help keep your dog safe this holiday season.



1- Do not leave your dog outside unsupervised. Just because your dog has fur, it does not mean he can withstand the cold. Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm, dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure they always wear some sort of ID. If your dog is in the

cold and begins excessively shaking or shivering, get it back to warm place as soon as possible. If you suspect your dog is developing hypothermia, take it to a vet immediately.



2- Small dogs or those with little to no hair should have sweaters or coats for protection against the cold. I don't recommend jackets or rain coats for dogs with long fur. These dogs have a natural jacket and additional coats will interfere with their body temperature regulation.



3- I do recommend booties but you need to take the time to find the right fit. Booties can keep your dog's feet safe from dangerous objects hidden in the snow, salt on roads/sidewalks and booties can also give your dog a better grip on ice. I do not recommend letting your dog walk or run with booties in deep snow. They can fill up with snow and actually cause hypothermia.



4- Avoid letting your dog eat snow or anything else on the ground in general. Dangerous objects or chemicals may be hidden under the snow. Also, eating snow can cause stomach upset and even hypothermia.



5- Beware of antifreeze - It is highly toxic! Antifreeze tastes good to pets, but even a small amount can kill your dog. Though exposure to antifreeze is a risk all year, the risk is especially high during the winter. Keep your eyes on your dog at all times - and keep antifreeze out of reach. If you suspect your dog has had ANY exposure to antifreeze, get to a vet right away.



6- Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. They can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws and paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice. It is ideal to trim the fur on your dog's paws, legs and lower stomach areas to prevent snow from balling up on their coats.



7- Never leave your dog alone in a car during the cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.



8- Make sure your holiday decorations are out of range and dog proof. Supervise your dog when playing with their doggie gifts to make sure they are safe. Some dog toys and treats can be dangerous. Tinsel is particularly dangerous for dogs. If swallowed, it can obstruct circulation and block the intestines.



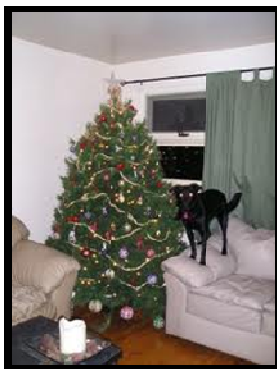
9- The holiday season may be fun and exciting for you and your family but it is a stressful time for dogs. Try to keep a normal schedule during all the excitement. They still need exercise, training, socialization, care and affection.



10- Did you know that your dog's normal temperature is a few degrees higher than yours? Winter is the perfect time of year to snuggle up – so have fun and stay warm!



11- Many dogs are less active during the winter, and don't burn as many calories as in the warmer months. Reduce your dog's diet during the winter, to avoid excessive weight gain.



12- Be Careful With Holiday Plants. Certain plants commonly seen during the holidays can upset a dog's stomach or worse – make them really sick. Sharp pine needles from Christmas trees can be dangerous if ingested. Poinsettia plants, mistletoe, holly and lilies are harmful or poisonous to dogs and should be kept out of reach.