

Julie Kuenstle
VP of Communications
713.870.0304

Lifesaving Tips for Outdoor Pets

Reminder to Pet Owners: Safe Outdoor Dogs Act and Protecting Pets During the Freeze

[FILE IMAGES LINK HERE](#)

HOUSTON (January 3, 2025)—Houston SPCA urges pet owners to pay special attention to their outdoor pets as **freezing** temperatures are expected hit early next week. A pet's age, breed or health may impact how they tolerate inclement weather. It is strongly recommended that all companion animals be brought indoors during the freeze. If a pet is outdoors in inclement weather, the [Safe Outdoor Dogs Act](#) requires pet owners to provide access to drinking water and protection from extreme temperatures with adequate shelter.



The Houston SPCA offers a reminder to pet owners about the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act and offers tips to help keep outdoor animals safe:

Provide MORE: Food, Water and Shelter: Outdoor pets need to consume 25 to 50 percent more calories than usual because the cold weather tends to deplete their energy. Make sure to provide fresh water for your pet and use plastic food and water bowls as your pet's tongue can stick to metal, or the water can freeze. Outdoor pets should have a shelter or doghouse that will protect them from the wind and is elevated. Add in blankets, towels or hay to help keep your pet warm and dry.

Exercise Care with Cats, Canines and Cars: In the winter, the interior of an idle car can act as a refrigerator, so never leave pets in a car. Keep your cats indoors during cold weather as they may sleep under the hoods of cars to stay warm. *Give an outdoor cat a chance to escape by banging loudly on the car hood before starting your car*

Recognize Signs of Distress: If your pet shows signs of hypothermia including shallow breathing, weakness, lethargy and shivering, bring them inside immediately and contact your veterinarian.



Equine & Farm Animals: Be sure horses have access to a barn or a three-sided structure with a roof so they can escape the wind and cold if needed. While not all horses will need to be blanketed, blankets will help horses keep warm and dry, especially in the rain or freezing temperatures. Frequently check water troughs and buckets to ensure the water is not frozen. Provide access to extra grain and hay if no grazing is available. Feed your horse unlimited forage during extreme cold to help them increase and regulate their body temperatures.

[On February 15, 2021](#), Houston SPCA and HPD responded to four dogs left in the freezing weather in southwest Houston. They discovered one dog deceased and rescued three other dogs from the freezing temperatures. The community is encouraged to call 713-869-7722(SPCA) if they see an animal in immediate distress or report cruelty at HoustonSPCA.org.

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