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## Lifesaving Tips for Outdoor Pets

*Reminder to Pet Owners: Safe Outdoor Dogs Act and Protecting Pets This Weekend*

### FILE

Credit: Houston SPCA

HOUSTON (January 20, 2025) – Houston SPCA urges pet owners to pay special attention to their outdoor pets as **freezing** temperatures are expected to hit the greater Houston area this Saturday evening. A pet's age, breed, or health may impact how they tolerate inclement weather, so **the rescue and protection organization recommends that all companion animals be brought indoors during a freeze**. If a pet is outdoors in inclement weather, the [Safe Outdoor Dogs Act](#) requires pet owners to provide access to drinkable water and protection from extreme temperatures with adequate shelter.



*File: winter rescue 2021*

### Houston SPCA offers pet owners 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 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 protects them from wind and rain, and the shelter should be elevated. Add blankets, towels or hay to help keep your pet warm and dry.

**Exercise caution with cats, dogs, and cars:** During winter, a parked car can quickly become dangerously cold — never leave pets inside. In freezing weather, outdoor cats may crawl under car hoods to stay warm. Before starting your vehicle, tap or knock on the hood to give them a chance to move to safety.

**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 need to be blanketed, blankets help keep them warm and dry, especially in the rain or when temperatures drop. 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 regulate their body 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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