

## November Truth About Article: Cold Weather Care

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Since we had the first official snow fall of the season in October, I thought it was appropriate to discuss how to care for our pets this month. Pets, like children, need food, water, shelter, and supervision. As temperatures reach freezing, here are a few tips we have to help.

1. **Shelter.** Being outside can be difficult enough, but when you add in sleet, snow, and wind chill, the temperature pets are exposed to is much colder than what the thermometer says. A pet that is wet will lose body heat faster than a dry one. An insulated, temperature-controlled environment in the home with owners is best. If this is not available, then an insulated shelter with a SAFE heat source that will not start a fire or burn pets is the next best thing.
2. **Food and Water.** This is a pretty simple task, but not the most intuitive one. Please make sure food and water sources that have been outside are not frozen. Kibbles can stick together when exposed to moisture or pet saliva and ice is not an accessible form of water. Please check food and water dishes at least twice daily. Heated water bowls may also be a good investment.
3. **Supervision.** This can be the most difficult request. Who wants to stand outside and watch their pet go to the bathroom? But if you are cold, they are cold. Pets can cause a lot of frustration by not coming back inside right away because they want to play, but pets left outside unsupervised for prolonged periods of time present to veterinarians frequently. There are accidents such as cuts, abrasions, and knee injuries from slipping on ice. Then, there are exposure injuries such as frostbite, hypothermia, and death. Please keep pets safe this winter and contact your vet with any questions or concerns.

The duration of exposure and tolerable cold temperature does depend on breed and their acclimation to the weather. Please see the attached chart from PetPlan Pet Insurance for a simplified guide to cold weather temperatures for pets.

