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## **The Humane Society of Huron Valley Has No Tolerance for Freezing Pets**

Ann Arbor, MI. Each year during the winter months, the Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV) receives calls about animals left out in the elements without adequate protection. Plunging winter temperatures can be extremely dangerous for companion animals.

“Even though Michigan state law doesn’t prevent dogs from living outside, we remind people that the law does require proper shelter and bedding,” said HSHV Cruelty Investigator, Julie Curtis. “During the freezing winter months we have zero tolerance for dogs found living outside without appropriate protection and if found to be in danger, those animals will be removed for their own safety.”

Dogs living outside require soundly-built, weatherproof doghouses or insulated plastic “igloo” type houses. The doghouse should face south or east, preventing the opening from facing prevailing winds. Ideally, the doghouse should be elevated off the ground. The law requires adequate bedding be placed inside the doghouse when temperatures drop below freezing. HSHV Animal Cruelty Investigators suggest using straw instead of wood shavings or blankets because straw holds a dog’s body heat longer and doesn’t collect moisture and freeze.

Animals living outdoors in the winter also have extra nutritional needs to survive. HSHV has investigated several cases of emaciated dogs found dead this winter and strongly recommends that you keep your pets inside in extreme temperatures. Animals that are outside during freezing weather also need a constant source of fresh water, so check your dog’s bowl often to ensure it hasn’t frozen.

“Educating the public on proper animal care is our main goal, but we take all complaints of animals subjected to unsafe conditions seriously,” said Curtis. “Cases found to be valid will be submitted to the Washtenaw County prosecutor’s office on charges of animal cruelty.”

### HSHV Recommendations:

1. Keep your pets indoors, safe and warm with the rest of your family. Remember, that it is completely free to bring your dog in the house to keep him or her warm in the winter! You don’t need straw or a dog house. Cats should also be kept indoors in extreme temperatures. Cats and kittens can easily freeze to death.
2. During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
3. 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 yours always wears ID tags and is microchipped.
4. Thoroughly wipe off your dog’s legs and stomach when he/she comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. He/She can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws and the paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.

5. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter as a longer coat will provide more warmth. When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to completely dry him/her before going out for a walk. Own a short-haired breed? Consider getting a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.
6. Never leave your dog or cat alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
7. Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs, and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you may opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him/her outdoors only to relieve themselves.
8. Does your dog spend a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities? Increase his/her supply of food, particularly protein, to keep them—and their fur—in tip-top shape.
9. Like coolant, antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Visit the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#) more information.
10. Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.

To learn more important “Cold Weather” safety information, visit [www.hshv.org](http://www.hshv.org). To report cases of animal cruelty or neglect, call the Humane Society of Huron Valley at 734.662.5585. If you would like to help the Humane Society of Huron Valley, consider donating time or money, or adopting a homeless companion animal.

HSHV is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving all of Washtenaw County and relies solely on donations from businesses and individuals in our community. The mission of the Humane Society of Huron Valley is to find loving homes for every adoptable animal in our care and prevent cruelty to animals. We are open to the public from noon until 6:00 pm, seven days a week and are located at 3100 Cherry Hill Road in Ann Arbor.

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