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Winter Storm Safety for Pets

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offers the following winter storm safety tips for domestic pets.

The following tips will help pet owners prepare for winter storms:

- If it's too cold for you, it's too cold for your pet. Never leave your pet outside during a snowstorm for longer than you would want to be out there with them.
- Don't let your dog off leash after heavy snowfall, as they can easily become lost.
- Clean off your dog's paws and belly with a moist washcloth after going outside. Snow-melting salt can be very painful to dogs' feet and can make them ill if ingested. Clumps of snow can accumulate between toes and cause pain as well. Dog boots and salves can be purchased to protect sensitive dog paws.
- Make sure all pets wear collars and tags with up-to-date identification. The ASPCA recommends micro-chipping your pet as a more permanent form of identification.
- During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep underneath cars for shelter. Bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give any resting cats a chance to escape.
- If you lose power, be sure candles aren't in a location where your pet can knock them over.

To prevent your pet from going stir-crazy during this week's storms, try these tips:

- Give your pet a puzzle toy stuffed with food, such as a kong.
- If pets get all their toys at once, they'll get bored. Keep toys in rotation throughout the week so they feel new again.
- Provide a perch where your cat can sit and watch the action outside.
- Hiding treats around the house can keep pets active and engaged. Keep in mind that any additional treats should be factored into their daily diet.
- Going up and down stairs is a great way to help your dog exercise indoors, but be careful to avoid injury.