

Chemicals Caution:

Winter walks can become downright dangerous if chemicals from ice-melting agents are licked off of bare paws. Antifreeze can cause vomiting, loss of coordination, and depression. Rock salt can cause injury to the kidneys, seizures, coma or death. Remember, even if you choose a pet-friendly de-icer, your neighbors may not -- so take extra steps to keep your dog safe during his daily walks. Rock salt and antifreeze will also cause chemical burns on skin if the animal comes into contact with it. Consider wiping off or cleaning feet after walks.

Paw Protection

Massaging petroleum jelly or other paw protectants into paw pads before going outside can help protect from salt and chemical agents. Booties provide even more coverage and can also prevent sand and salt from getting lodged between bare toes and causing irritation. Use pet-friendly ice melts whenever possible.

Bundle up:

Although most pets have a fur coat, sometimes it isn't enough to keep them warm. For any pet that is older or ill consider getting extra blankets or a coat to help keep them cozy. If your dog is short-haired, consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly.

Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. If your dog is long-haired, simply trim him to minimize the clinging ice balls, salt crystals and de-icing chemicals that can dry his skin, and don't neglect the hair between his toes.

Staying snuggly

Animals that stay outside during winter need to have proper shelter and bedding. This includes a structure able to keep out the snow and wind. Bedding should be changed to keep clean and dry throughout the cooler seasons. Check on the water dish several times throughout the day and refresh as needed to keep it thawed. Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep your animals inside whenever possible.

If there is any concern about toxin ingesting, frost bite, hypothermia, etc. contact your veterinarian.