



December 13, 2010
#101213-HOLPETS SAFE

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Holiday Pet Precautions

Holidays and cold weather are well on their way. While enjoying this festive time of year, Santa Rosa County Animal Services asks residents to take the following precautions to help keep their pets safe during this joyous time of year:

Beware of the Elements

- Keep pets inside when the temperature drops. Cats can get frostbite and should be kept indoors year-round. Many dog breeds, such as greyhounds, are also highly susceptible to the cold.
- Make sure antifreeze is inaccessible, and clean up any spills in your garage immediately. Antifreeze has a sweet taste animals find irresistible, but it can be deadly if swallowed. Choosing an antifreeze that uses Propylene Glycol rather than Ethylene Glycol is safest for pets and gentle to the environment.
- Cats will seek warmth where they can get it, and that may be the warm engine of a car just parked. Before starting your car, knock on the hood or honk the horn to scare off any cats - and prevent tragedy.

When Traveling

- Before traveling with your pet, contact your veterinarian to ensure all vaccinations are up to date including a current rabies vaccination.
- Feed your pet at least 4 hours before traveling in a car or airplane. This will help to alleviate upset stomach. Regular brisk walks will help to keep your pet content and happy while traveling. Always walk your pet on a leash to ensure his safety, especially when introduced to a new home or unfamiliar environment.
- Pets need to have a collar on with a rabies tag at all times. Should your pet become lost, the rabies tag information will help local animal control reunite you with your pet.
- Bring a portable kennel while traveling, this will give the pet a safe and comfortable place to reside while you are visiting and enjoying holiday festivities.
- Whenever introducing pets and children use great care. Pets that are friendly in their own environment may be anxious and nervous elsewhere. To help prevent dog bites, only give your pets their toys, rawhide bones, or other treats in a private setting. This will prevent the pet from becoming possessive around strangers and/or small children.

Give Thanks, Not Turkey Bones

- Keep turkey, ham or any other leftover bones away from pets. Bones can tear or obstruct your pet's intestinal tract.
- Don't "stuff" your pets. Found in abundance in turkey stuffing, onions can destroy a dog's red blood cells, leading to anemia. In addition, rich, fatty foods like turkey skin or gravy can cause pancreatitis in animals.

Decorate With an Eye for Safety

- Keep enticing tinsel, ribbons and garlands away from pets. If ingested, these can become lodged in animals' intestines, causing life-threatening obstructions.
- Remember when decorating with live plants, many are toxic to pets if ingested including Poinsettias, Amaryllis, live Christmas tress, Holly berries, Jerusalem Cherry, Mistletoe, Pyracantha and Rosary Pea.

- Secure or cover light cords to deter chewing. Pet-proof extension cords are an even better way to make sure your pet does not shock or electrocute themselves.

Give the Gift of Life

Santa Rosa County Animal Services has many cats and dogs of all ages that are in need of a home. Adoptable animals can be viewed on the county's website at www.santarosa.fl.gov/animals.

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