



FREE GUIDE

Seasonal safety guide

Hot and cold weather care that actually matters

Introduction

Seasonal risks to pets are often underestimated because they build gradually or aren't obvious until they're serious — a warm-feeling car interior, a paw pad, an antifreeze puddle. This guide covers the seasonal hazards that cause the most real harm, and the straightforward habits that prevent them.

Hot weather

A parked car's interior can climb over 20 degrees above the outside temperature within just 10 minutes — even on a mild 70°F day, that's well into dangerous territory, and 'cracking a window' doesn't meaningfully change this. Never leave a pet alone in a parked car, period, regardless of how quick the errand feels. On hot pavement, the 7-second rule applies: if you can't hold the back of your hand on the pavement for 7 seconds, it's too hot for paw pads — walk on grass, or walk during cooler morning/evening hours instead.

- Never leave a pet alone in a parked car, even briefly
- Test pavement with your hand before a walk; use grass or shift walk times if it's too hot
- Watch for heavy panting, drooling, or lethargy — early heatstroke signs
- Always have fresh water available, and limit strenuous exercise during peak heat

Cold weather

Cold tolerance varies enormously by breed, coat, size, and age — a Siberian Husky and a Chihuahua have very different real limits. Small, short-coated, senior, or very young pets are at higher risk and often benefit from a coat on walks. Watch for shivering, reluctance to walk, or lifting paws repeatedly — signs it's time to head in, not push through.

Ice, salt, and antifreeze

De-icing salt can irritate paw pads and is toxic if licked off in enough quantity — wiping paws after winter walks addresses both. Antifreeze is highly toxic and has a sweet taste that can attract pets to lick it from driveways or garage floors; clean spills immediately and consider a propylene-glycol-based (less toxic) antifreeze if you have pets.

Year-round: know the signs of heatstroke and hypothermia

Heatstroke (heavy panting, drooling, vomiting, collapse) and hypothermia (intense shivering progressing to lethargy and weakness) are both medical emergencies — move the pet to a safe temperature immediately and get to a vet right away rather than waiting to see if it resolves on its own.

Seasonal safety checklist

- ☐ Never leaving a pet alone in a parked car, in any season
- ☐ Testing pavement temperature with your hand before hot-weather walks
- ☐ Coat or reduced walk time for small/short-coated/senior pets in cold weather
- ☐ Paws wiped after walks on salted or icy surfaces
- ☐ Antifreeze spills cleaned immediately; propylene-glycol-based antifreeze considered
- ☐ Knowing the signs of heatstroke and hypothermia, and treating either as an emergency

Summary

Most seasonal risk comes from a small set of predictable hazards — a parked car, hot pavement, ice-melt salt, antifreeze — that are simple to prevent once you know to watch for them.

This guide is for general education only and is not a substitute for advice from a certified trainer, veterinarian, or veterinary behaviorist. If you're seeing signs of distress, aggression, or a sudden change in behavior, please consult a professional who can assess your pet directly.