



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional information contact:

Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7182 or Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov

Cold Temps Tough on Pets, too!

GRAND RAPIDS – Just because your pet has a fur coat, doesn't mean he or she can handle the cold temperatures. The Kent County Animal Shelter wants pet owners to take some precautions this time of year to keep pets safe.

Try to keep pets indoors as much as possible when temperatures and wind chill factors are in the teens, single digits, or less. Make sure you keep your pet on a leash or in a fenced in area when they need to relieve themselves. "The smaller the pet, the quicker the cold impacts them," says Carly Luttmann, Shelter Supervisor for the Kent County Animal Shelter. "Puppies and kittens are especially sensitive to the cold, as are older pets. Be sure you minimize the amount of time they are outdoors." Make sure they are sleeping in a warm place, away from drafty doors or windows.

Luttmann also says watch out for community cats that might crawl under the hood of your car to keep warm. "Bang loudly on the hood before starting the car," she says. "If a cat is under the hood when you turn on the car, it could be injured or killed by the fan belt." Never leave pets in a car during the winter. Temperatures can be just as cold inside the car as they are outdoors.

If you or your neighbors use salt on sidewalks or driveways, be sure to wipe off your pets paws and stomach. Salt can cause a pet's paws to become very dry and brittle. If they groom by licking it off, they can get sick from the chemicals. Also beware of antifreeze. Even a small amount can be lethal in pets.

The Kent County Animal Shelter recommends residents who see a pet being neglected or left in a dangerous situation call Animal Control at 616.632.7300. For more cold weather tips, check out the American Veterinary Medical Association website at: <https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/Cold-weather-pet-safety.aspx>.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.