

## ASPCA Urges Pet Owners to Prepare for Winter Storms

Written by Kelly Krause

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### ***Heeding some cold weather cautions can keep pets safe during storms Maximus and Nika***

**New York, N.Y.**—In anticipation of multiple winter storms hitting the central and eastern U.S. this week, the [ASPCA](#)<sup>®</sup> (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals<sup>®</sup>) urges pet owners to take measures to keep their families and pets safe. Winter storm Maximus has already affected 30 states, many of which will also be affected by Nika later this week.

“With such heavy amounts of snow, it’s important to bring your pets inside and know what dangers your pets face in these extreme conditions,” said Dr. Dick Green, senior director of Disaster Response for the ASPCA [Field Investigations and Response team](#). “Winter storms create risks for both humans and pets alike.”

The ASPCA urges pet owners to develop an emergency plan that accounts for the safety of their animals, to stay up to date on community storm warnings, and to check with their local Office of Emergency Management for important information.

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

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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 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.

For more information on disaster preparedness and cold weather pet safety tips from the ASPCA, please visit <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness> .