



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Pet Safety during Cold Weather**

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## **Keep Pet Safety in Mind during Cold Weather**

With overnight temperatures well below freezing and colder weather on the way this winter, the City of Yakima Code Administration Division reminds the community to remember pet safety.

In just the past month, for example, the Yakima Fire Department (YFD) responded to three shed fires that involved heat lamps used to keep animals warm. Three puppies died in one fire. Three chickens died in a shed fire just last night, Wednesday, in which YFD assisted the West Valley Fire Department.

Speaking of heat lamps:

- Ensure there is always someone watching the animal under the lamp in person or even on a camera. If you are unable to watch it, turn off the lamp and place the animal in straw or thermal blankets.
- Most thermal dog blankets are encased with a thermal layer, so the dog's body heat keeps it warm.
- Keep flammable items, such as bedding, at least 3 feet away from the lamp.
- Make sure the lamp is securely fastened so it cannot be knocked over. It needs to be secured with something that isn't combustible or won't melt from overheating. "Sometimes people secure a hanging heat lamp with nylon twine, which can easily melt and cause the lamp to fall into the animal's bedding," said Fire Chief Aaron Markham.
- Ensure electrical circuits are not overloaded. Heat lamps use more amperage than regular lights.
- Never connect a heat lamp to an extension cord.
- Do check for frayed wires and keep out of reach of children and pets.

American Humane recommends the following before winter storms strike:

- Plan ahead and pay attention to cold-weather warnings.
- Unless significant power outages are experienced, most cold-weather episodes and winter storms are "shelter in place" events, so pet care needs should be planned for in the home. Keep your pet preparedness kit well-stocked and ready.
- Leave your pets' coats a little longer in the winter to provide more warmth. That summer "short cut" from your groomer should be avoided during cold weather.
- If you have short-haired breeds, consider getting them a coat or sweater that covers them from neck to tail and around the abdomen.

If you see pets in the City of Yakima that appear to be neglected, report concerns to the City's animal control hotline at 509-575-6038. You can also submit complaints and photos about the concern through the City's Yak Back app on the City website at <https://www.yakimawa.gov>

The report should include incident address, the animal's welfare, and type of concern you have. Reports can be filed anonymously, but it is preferable to provide contact information in case an officer needs to reach out for further details.

Photos of animal-related issues can also be sent to Animal Control Officer Anthony Diaz at [Anthony.diaz@yakimawa.gov](mailto:Anthony.diaz@yakimawa.gov)

Click <https://www.yakimawa.gov/services/animal-control/> for more about the City's animal control services.