



Virginia Animal Control Association
P.O. Box 20462
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For immediate release

Virginia Animal Control Association urges increased awareness during extreme cold

The Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA) is urging pet owners to take extra precautions as a result of the extreme cold weather throughout Virginia. Virginia law requires the provision of adequate shelter for companion animals. Under the law, adequate shelter is defined as,

“Provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal; is safe and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, the adverse effects of heat or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted; is properly cleaned; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when detrimental to the species; and, for dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device that is large enough for the animal to lie on in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary manner. Under this chapter, shelters whose wire, grid, or slat floors: (i) permit the animals' feet to pass through the openings; (ii) sag under the animals' weight; or (iii) otherwise do not protect the animals' feet or toes from injury are not adequate shelter.”

Failure to provide adequate shelter could result in removal of the animal and neglect or cruelty charges with convictions bringing fines and/or a jail sentence. If you suspect animal neglect or cruelty, please call your local animal control agency as soon as possible.