



**Virginia Animal Control Association  
450 TV Drive  
Fredericksburg, VA 22408**

### **Position Statement on Cold Weather Care for Pets**

The Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA) urges pet owners to take precautions when cold temperatures are expected. Access to shelter is vitally important, especially when temperatures reach the teens and single digits. Virginia law requires the provision of adequate shelter for companion animals. Under the law, adequate shelter includes protection from “the adverse effects of heat or cold.”

Additional considerations:

- If you have an outside pet, add more insulation to the shelter (such as straw or other bedding) to help protect against the extreme cold.
  - VACA encourages you to bring the animal indoors.
- Check outside water sources frequently as they’ll be quick to freeze
- Outdoor pets need more calories during extreme cold to help stay warm. Check with your veterinarian about a proper diet.
- VACA recommends protection from the extreme cold for agricultural animals

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.

*Revised 03/01/17*

*Providing a united voice for Animal Care and Control Professionals throughout Virginia!*  
[www.vacaonline.net](http://www.vacaonline.net)