

MISSOULA  
COUNTY

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MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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## WINTER SAFETY FOR PETS

A safe holiday for pets is a happy holiday for everyone. December is a busy time, but take a few moments to think about wintertime dangers to your pets.

- Our rivers, so attractive to pets in summertime, can turn deadly when they ice over in winter. The ice is often thin, and dogs fall through and can be pulled under. Calls to Animal Control for rescue help are among the saddest for officers because it's usually not possible to save the animals. Please don't let your dog run out on ice over water.
- The deicer you use on your sidewalks to keep guests from slipping can be dangerous to your pets. It can burn their paws or be poisonous to them when they lick their paws.
- Remember that as little as a teaspoon of antifreeze can kill your pet if ingested. Store and dispose of it properly.
- Be careful with Christmas decorations. Puppies can chew on ornaments and electrical cords. Cats can choke on tinsel. Keep holiday plants out of reach. Some, such as poinsettias, are poisonous.
- Guard against lost pets during the bustle of the holidays. Pets need identification to be returned to their homes. Make sure every cat or dog has a collar and tag or a microchip. Microchips are inexpensive and easy, and Animal Control staff scans each found animal for microchips. Remember that off the owners' property dogs are to be leashed with an owner attached, and cats are not allowed to run loose in the City limits unless they are spayed or neutered. For cats who venture out on their own, please use a safe cat collar –

one with a breakaway fastening or elastic – with a tag. Fewer lost cats than dogs are reunited with their owners because they lack collars.

- Give your pet the gift of spaying or neutering. Pets are less likely to wander, live longer and healthier and don't create more pets who might be unwanted; pet overpopulation is a national problem. We have more than 60 cats and kittens waiting for new homes at the shelter. They are all strays, abandoned or released by their owners. If spaying or neutering is a financial hardship, call Animal Control to learn about programs that help with the cost.
- Consider our holiday promotion, The Twelve Cats of Christmas. The Animal Control staff does not promote giving pets as gifts, but if you've been thinking of adopting, the holidays can be a good time, when you have some time off work at home and family members are around to welcome the new pet. A new pet can also ease holiday loneliness. The Twelve Cats of Christmas program offers cats for adoption at the low adoption fee of \$25; they are already spayed or neutered and have some of their shots, including rabies shots if they are old enough.
- If you aren't able to adopt but want to help animals this holiday season, the Animal Control shelter can always use donations of cat litter, dog and cat toys, cleaning supplies and other items that help us take care of the pets while they are awaiting their forever homes.

The staff at Animal Control is always happy to take your questions at 541-7387.

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