



Protection From the Cold

- Provide shelters to keep cats warm. These can be easy and inexpensive to build yourself, or can be purchased pre-made online. Check out our new do-it-yourself shelter video. <http://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-build-an-outdoor-shelter/>
- Insulate shelters with straw. Not only is straw less expensive and easy to come by (just check your local pet supply store or garden center), but straw repels moisture.
- Remove snow from all shelter entrances and exits. It is important to keep cats from getting snowed in.



Extra Food and Water

- Increase food portions to help cats conserve energy and stay warm. Canned or wet food, which takes less energy to digest, should be in insulated containers. Dry food, which will not freeze, also works.
- Keep water from freezing to prevent dehydration. To keep water drinkable, use bowls that are deep rather than wide and place them in a sunny spot. Or use heated electric bowls.



A Little Precaution Could Save a Cat's Life

- Do not use antifreeze, which is deadly, in an area accessible to cats. Keep antifreeze out of reach and clean up spills. Most antifreeze brands use ethylene glycol as the main ingredient, so be sure to switch to a brand made with propylene glycol because it is less toxic.
- Refrain from using salt and chemicals to melt snow. These can be lethal when licked off paws or ingested from melting puddles and can hurt a cat's paw pads.
- Check your car before you drive. Look between your tires and give the hood of your car a few taps before starting it to make sure that a cat has not hidden underneath or inside the engine for warmth.



Spay and Neuter Before Kitten Season

Winter is the prime breeding season for community cats and the ideal time to spay and neuter. If you're conducting [Trap-Neuter-Return](#) (TNR)—the only humane and effective approach to stabilize community cat populations—in the winter, follow these safety tips:

- Check the traps frequently and provide a warm holding area, pre-and-post surgery. If it's too cold for you, then it's probably too cold for cats to be in traps, exposed to the elements, for extended periods of time. Keep traps covered and secured in a temperature-controlled vehicle or building.
- Ask your veterinarian to shave only a small area for spay/neuter surgery. This will help the cats stay warm by maintaining maximum fur coverage.