

Cold weather and dogs

It can take up to 6 weeks for dogs to acclimatise to changes in temperature and the UK weather rapidly changes. The cold also brings other considerations such as rain, hail, ice and snow which can also be hazardous. If the weather is dangerous outside e.g., very slippery or snowy consider how essential the journey or planned activity is and make alternative arrangements if needed.

Things to consider

- When the weather is frosty, salt/grit is often used on the ground so dogs should have their legs and paws washed with water upon their return, to ensure they do not ingest the salt. Doing so could cause the dog to have digestive upset.
- After any activity it is important to towel dry the dogs so that they do not become cold.
- Do not let your dog drink from puddles on driveways, as this may be from screen wash/antifreeze which is lethal for them to consume.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is when the body temperature falls below 38.2°C. Body functions will begin to slow down and could even stop. Fit and healthy adult dogs are at risk if left in a cold and damp environment for an extended period of time.

Symptoms include:

- Shivering
- Body feels cold to the touch
- Slow/shallow breathing
- Lethargy
- Failing consciousness

What to do

If a dog starts to display signs of hypothermia you should move away from wet/cold areas. Apply blankets, towels, or coats for warmth. It is important to warm the body up slowly and not use an external heat source (such as a hot water bottle) as this will draw the heat away from the internal organs. If your dog is suffering from hypothermia begin the warming process and take the dog to the vets. You should call ahead to let them know you are on the way.