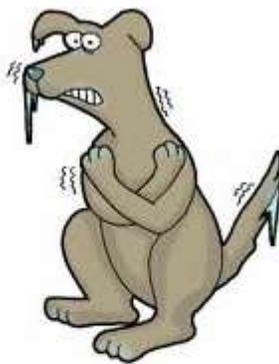


HOUSING TIPS FOR AN OUTSIDE DOG

DOGS NEED PROTECTION from the cold and wet weather of winter!

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR OUTSIDE DOG WARM AND HEALTHY:

- Dogs need a warm, insulated shelter, **small enough for the dog to warm up the shelter with his/her own body heat and large enough for the dog to stand and turn around in.** The shelter should be filled with **bedding such as cedar chips (preferred) or straw.** Bedding should be changed out several times a year to keep it clean and free of bugs and such. Check for gaps and holes and fill them with insulating foam or caulk.
- For warmth in winter, a **dark roof will absorb heat from the sun.**
- Dog house **openings should face away from the North and West** to avoid the cold wind and rain that blows in from those directions. (i.e. they should face towards the rising sun in the morning.)
- Dog houses should be **placed in a dry area that doesn't**



Have a heart!
Keep your dog **WARM**
this **WINTER!**

collect water pools when it rains.

The houses should be **elevated on bricks, cinder blocks, or wooden runners** to keep the floor dry. A spare wood pallet can also be used.

- Houses should be **constructed of wood or plastic.** Metal is no good since it conducts cold and will not keep your pet warm. If the house is made of plastic, be sure that it contains plenty of warm, dry bedding – cedar chips or straw. (Blankets are not good because they become wet and will retain the moisture. Wet, frozen blankets will only cause your dog to freeze!

- **To increase the insulation** of your dog's house in very cold temperatures stack **6 bales of straw in a U-shape around the sides and back of the dog's house.**

Make the stack high enough to reach the



Tips for Housing Your Dog Outdoors (if you must)

PAWS of Central Virginia

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top of the dog house. **Place a weather-treated sheet of ¾ inch plywood over the top.** Tuck additional loose straw up over the roof of the house. The straw will insulate against the wind and cold and the plywood will keep the straw from getting wet. It will also make a nice platform that your dog will enjoy standing on. If it's in a pen make sure that it's not close enough to the sides that the dog will be able to jump over the fence!

- If your dog is inclined to chew wood, you may need to cover corners and entrance edges with metal, (dry walling corner strips) to prevent damage.
- Once a dog has been accustomed to living outside and providing they have sufficiently warm housing, they should remain outside. Keeping a dog inside sometimes and outside other times can lower the dog's resistance to cold and illness.

Remember - dogs with short hair, thin fur, old dogs, sick dogs, and very small dogs all suffer in the cold and should be kept inside.

Also important to help your dog stay warm and healthy:

- **Exercise!** Dogs generate heat when they run and exercise. If your dog is outside, he should have freedom and space to run around. If you need help to obtain a fenced enclosure for your dog, contact PAWS for information about building or obtaining a pen.
- **Plenty of good quality food.** Dry kibble is fine but it should be a good quality and not a cheap, discount brand. Your dog should have enough food that it has enough fat to keep warm. A skinny dog is a cold dog! It helps to feed your dog once in the morning and again in the evening.
- **Clean and thawed water every day.** Check the water daily to make sure that it's clean and not frozen. You might want to have 2 water pails so that you can simply replace the frozen pale when needed. If the dog is in a pen, attach the water pail with a clip or tie to the side of the pen or dog house to keep it from tipping over.