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Jean Woolery

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**IN BITTER COLD WEATHER, KEEP AN EYE ON PETS.
(Jefferson County Post)**

Article from: St Louis Post-Dispatch (MO) | December 24, 2001 | Hathaway, Matthew | Copyright

When the temperature drops, Jean Woolery's telephone starts ringing

Concerned residents call her when they notice a neighbor's dog has been left outside for hours, even days, in subzero weather. But too often, the director of the Jefferson County Humane Society says, these calls come in too late, and little can be done to save the animal. This year, she wants things to be different.

"Last winter when the weather got real bad, we were getting eight to 10 calls a day on our hotline, there is no way that we can handle that many calls, we just don't have the staff," Woolery said. "It's really important that, this year, people call in their concerns as soon as possible, as soon as they start getting suspicious that there may be serious neglect."

Woolery said that people also could call Jefferson County Animal Control, the sheriff's department or in serious cases of animal abuse call 911.

"People should not hesitate this winter to call the police," Woolery said. "State law requires that if an animal is left outside, it needs to have shelter, drinkable water, food and health care. People that break that law are committing a crime."

Woolery said that in the winter animals left outside can die of dehydration because their water bowls have frozen. Or, in a short time, pets can be so frostbitten that their legs need to be amputated or the animal needs to be euthanized.

"Last year there was a dog that was completely frostbitten, it didn't have any water or food, and the owner hadn't been home in days," Woolery said. "And there was another that was left outside for days tied to the bumper of an old pickup truck."

Vetennarians say if it's too cold for a dog owner, it's probably too cold for a dog.

"The best guidelines are if you're outside for 20 minutes wearing a heavy winter coat and you're cold, it is way too cold for your pet to be outside without shelter," said John R. Bates, a veterinarian at Imperial Animal Hospital.

Outdoor doghouses, Bates said, should be covered, dry and lined with straw or old blankets.

Winter weather can be particularly difficult for small and short-haired animals. But even large dogs bred for cold weather, such as huskies and malamutes, can become ill if their food and water freezes outside.

Woolery said that one reason neighbors hesitated to call the authorities was fear that the animal would be taken away and put to sleep. She said that if the animal is healthy and can survive, that rarely happens.

The Jefferson County Humane Society's hotline is 314-836-7585.