

FIRE SAFETY AND YOUR PET

Smoke alarms, carbon dioxide monitors and regular maintenance of one's furnace are all things we can do to improve the home environment for our pets and ourselves.



After you've planned for the family, don't forget the pets. Alert firefighters about your pets. House fires are a potentially lethal event for animals. They often cannot escape, and fire fighters may not know pets are present. Pets that are rescued often suffer from severe smoke inhalation or serious skin burns. In the event your pet suffers from smoke inhalation, rush the animal to the vet. Emergency veterinary care is essential for these animals to survive.

Every home with animals should have a prominent sign on the house to alert fire department personnel of the presence of pets in the house. This can help improve the likelihood of their rescue. Don't rely exclusively on window or door decals to alert firefighters—such decals are often found to be outdated.

Oftentimes, in the event of a fire, pets are lost or set free. Pets 911, the sister site to Earth 911, has emergency information, local shelter and rescue locations and information, as well as a lost-and-found database available to communities nationwide. In addition, the American Humane Association has disaster preparation information and updates on current fire situations.

This information is available at

http://www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=lib&a=Fire/fire_pets.asp

According to the National Safety Council, as many as 5,000 house fires a year can be attributed to pets as a result of their chewing electric cords. To help prevent this hazard, do your best to keep electric wiring out of the pet's sight and reach. Exposed lamp cords and other wires should be kept as short as possible. If extension cords are used, mount them against a baseboard so they cannot be played with or chewed.



Although a fire in the fireplace is cozy, it may create problems for pets. Cats luxuriate in its warmth. However, if they lie too close to the fire, they are in danger of hot cinders or sparks. Fireplace heat also contributes to dry skin. Fumes from the fireplace may cause respiratory problems in some pets. Keep fireplaces screened and train pets to keep a safe distance.