



Animal Control Newsletter



TOWN OF STERLING - JANUARY 2015

ACO REMINDERS

1. 2015 dog licensing in Sterling begins January 1st until April 15th.
2. After that a \$25.00 late fee is added automatically per dog. This is in addition of your licensing fee which is \$8.00 for spayed females and neutered males and \$12.00 for intact females and males. This is according to the Town of Sterling's Animal Control By-Laws.
3. Be prepared! Make sure your dogs rabies shot is up to date. Call your veterinarian to check. Without an updated rabies shot for your dog, you **cannot** license your dog in the State of Massachusetts (State Law).
4. Failure to license a dog in the town of Sterling may result in a criminal complaint being issued against you at Clinton District Court.

Any questions?...

**Contact the Sterling Police Department at
978-422-7331 to reach
Louis Massa the Animal Control Officer
Town of Sterling**



WINTER SAFETY TIPS

When it's cold, cats love to sit under the engine or even under the hood of a vehicle. These can be deadly spots when the engine starts. Before turning on your ignition, look under your car, tap on the hood, or honk the horn. Although dogs and cats are equipped with fur coats, they vary in thickness and ability to keep the animal warm. What's more, at the beginning of cold weather, most coats are just starting to thicken up again from the natural thinning process that takes place each summer. It usually takes a few months after the temperature drops for them to offer real protection. Some animals may never develop an adequate winter coat. If your dog or cat starts shivering when he's outside, either bring him in or bundle him up with a sweater. Frost-bite or hypothermia (a potentially deadly condition in which the core body temperature drops dangerously) can develop if unprotected pets are left in the cold too long.

TAILS & EARS IN COLD WEATHER

Despite their fur, pets can develop frostbite, the tissue damage that occurs with cold exposure. The skin becomes bright red, then pale, then black, after which it can fall off. Thoroughly wipe your pet's paws and belly with warm water when they come in, just in case they have picked up road salt, antifreeze or other chemicals that they might lick off. Salt can cause gastric distress in animals. Also, look for cuts from encrusted snow or ice and remove ice balls from between footpads. Avoid using salt-based melting products on your own property. Switch to sand, cat litter or an animal-safe de-icer. Make sure you rinse and dry your dog's feet after every walk. Checking their paws regularly and trimming the hair between the toes (with blunt-ended scissors) will prevent frostbite.

BE CAUTIOUS WITH SENIOR PETS

If your animal is older or has a heart/lung condition or arthritis, you might want to skip the long walks, cold air in the lungs can be damaging.

GIVE THEM SHELTER

If your dog or cat lives outdoors most of the time, they need a warm, protected shelter they can easily get to. Make sure your dog has a draft-proof doghouse. Keep with nonabsorbent bedding (such as hay). For felines, install a cat door to the basement or barn. Some dogs can stay outdoors most winter days if they have protection from the elements. The shelter should be raised off the ground so that air can circulate under and it doesn't get damp. The opening needs to be away from the prevailing winds. Be sure your animal has a continuous supply of water, preferably in a heated water dish.

DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

Cats and dogs like the sweet taste of antifreeze (ethylene glycol), so clean up spills promptly. Even a teaspoon is potentially lethal.

DANGER THIN ICE!!

There are no guarantees, watch your dog! Always consider ice potentially dangerous! Assess ice safety by using an ice chisel to chop a hole in the ice to determine its thickness and condition. Make sure you continue to do this as you go further out on the ice because the thickness will not be uniform all over the pond or lake. Be aware that ice tends to be thinner on lakes and ponds where there are spring holes, inlets or outlets. Don't venture on to ice bound rivers or streams as the currents make ice thickness unpredictable.