

Press Release

10 December 2010

Caring for your pets this festive season

Whilst gearing up with excitement and getting ready to celebrate this festive season, the Cape of Good Hope SPCA asks you to remember that it is extremely important to not forget your companion animals and to keep them safe and stress-free this holiday. Here are a few helpful hints.

- **Decorations:** Be careful with decorations as exposed wiring can electrocute a curious animal who chews on it. Discard wrapping paper, ribbons, bows and empty boxes as animals can easily become entangled. Mount your Christmas tree safely in a flat, wide-based container that cannot easily be pulled over. Tinsel strands can be deadly to pets and glass balls can shatter in an animal's mouth.
- **Holiday entertaining:** If you plan to entertain remember that noise and strangers can frighten animals. Keep them in a safe, peaceful environment instead. An animal's hearing is far more acute and sensitive than a human's. Therefore please be mindful when pulling Christmas crackers and popping champagne and balloons.
- **Responsible feeding:** Do not feed your pets Christmas lunch left overs such as bones, which can splinter and cause blockages. Also remember that chocolates are poisonous for animals.
- **Holiday planning for animals:** If you are going away for the holidays, try and choose a pet friendly destination. However if you are leaving your pets behind, please book a pet sitter or place in boarding kennels. Never abandon them and assume that they can and will take care of themselves because they definitely cannot and will not be able to cope.
- **Travelling:** If you are travelling for long distances in a car, ensure adequate ventilation and always take a bowl and a few litres of water along. If you plan to stop for a leg stretch, ensure that you have a proper collar and lead to walk the dog. Never leave an animal in the car during warm weather, even with the window open. On warm sunny days cars heat up quickly and become like ovens. If you come across an animal left in a locked car please immediately try to alert the owner or for example, alert shopping centre management, security personnel or report it, quoting the car registration, to the local police or the SPCA on 021 700 4158, 021 700 4159 or after hours telephone number 083 326 1604.

- **Identification:** Animals can go missing therefore please ensure that your pets have a means of identification, such as an identity tag and a microchip, so should they stray, they can be quickly reunited with their owners. So what is a microchip? It's a grain size chip that is painlessly inserted under the skin of the animal and when read by a scanner, will provide the owner's name and contact details. It's a simple non-invasive procedure that could turn your lost pet into a found one.

Contact the SPCA Animal Care Centre on 021 700 4140 or email lostandfound@spca-ct.co.za to arrange for your pet to be microchipped. The cost is R 190 (includes purchasing and inserting of the chip) and there is an annual subscription to Identipet of R 50.

Please remember all the other smaller animals as well, such as fish and birds etc, all requiring an equal amount of planning to ensure their wellbeing whilst you are on holiday. Companion animals need more than a mere bowl of food and water, they need to be checked on, exercised and socialised.

With this in mind, the Cape of Good Hope SPCA is appealing to all to please take good care of your wonderful pets this holiday so that both pet and owner may have a lovely festive season.

Ends