

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2011

Decorate With Your Pet in Mind

NAPPS Provides Holiday Safety Advice for Pet Parents

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J.— The leaves are falling, temperatures are dropping, and the holidays are just around the corner. Soon it will be time to hang decorations and kickoff the holiday baking season. The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS), a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals, encourages pet parents to protect the lives of their pets during the holiday season.

“Candles, wires, and chocolate can be fatal for a pet if left too accessible,” said John D’Ariano. “We urge pet parents to keep decorations that can be a danger to their pet’s health out of reach.”

Baking and trimming the tree are often holiday traditions in many pet parents’ homes. As the excitement of the season approaches, we must remember to keep our pets away from dangerous treats and decorations. With so much extra décor and treats in the house, pet parents must keep a close watch on their pets, especially during the holidays. NAPPS encourages pet parents to decorate with their pets in mind, keeping any dangerous materials out of Fido’s reach.

Before including pets in the holiday festivities, NAPPS advises pet parents to take the necessary precautions and the following tips into consideration to ensure a safe and happy holiday for the whole family.

Holiday Safety Tips to Remember as you Celebrate the Season:

Reduce Stress

Strangers and large groups in the home can create excitement—and stress—for pets. Consider these methods for reducing pet stress during gatherings:

- Reduce holiday stress for pets by maintaining regular exercise and feeding routines during the holiday.
- Exercise dogs shortly before a party to reduce stress.
- Provide a private room or area where pets can retreat to avoid the stress.
- During a busy party or day, a pet placed outdoors (including by a well-meaning guest), can be forgotten and freeze. Make sure someone is assigned to each pet to check on them during regular intervals.
- Dogs should be trained on how to greet guests—when greeting guests at the door, consider placing dogs on a leash.

General Tips

-Holiday plants with berries can be toxic, cause vomiting or worse, especially holly, mistletoe and poinsettias.

-Candles, incense and menorahs can all be dangerous to pets. Keep them out of reach of pets or have them supervised when lit.

-Potpourri and tobacco products left out can be toxic to pets.

-Be careful how you attach costumes to pets. Pets can choke on rubber bands, string, ropes and ribbons. These items can also cause discomfort if put on too tight or left on too long.

Chocolates can be toxic and fatal to pets; forego nice displays of chocolates if they will be unattended and easily accessible to pets.

-Provide healthy treats for guests to give pets.

-Guests should be prepared by letting them know you have a pet or pets, and providing a few simple tips on invitations:

"Please don't feed Whiskers, or leave food or beverages where she can reach them."

"Please stay with children when greeting and playing with Dusty."

"Please do not let or take Sparky out of the house without checking in with me or Bob, so we can give you the lay of the land." (Unannounced walks will not let you warn the walker about neighborhood dangers).

"Please let us know if you're bringing a pet."

Thanksgiving

-Keep bones (especially splinter-prone poultry bones) away from pets.

-Keep lids on garbage cans and keep them secure when no one is in the kitchen. Animals can smell treats from the next room!

-Don't leave alcoholic beverages unattended.

Christmas

-Secure trees to both the floor and ceiling, if possible, to prevent them from falling.

-Pine needles can choke and puncture intestines. If you have a live tree, consider how you deal with this common problem.

-Consider what ornaments you will place on more reachable low-hanging branches. Place ornaments with string hangers vs. metal hooks down low.

-Food on Christmas trees can tempt your pets. Consider whether or not hanging candy canes, ginger bread, popcorn or cranberries is a good idea.

-Make sure pets cannot get at the water in the tree base. Tree water can contain fertilizers and bacteria.

-Tinsel is attractive to pets and can block intestines or choke; consider an alternative decoration for your tree.

-The holidays bring increased use of electrical cords, which can be chewed through and cause electrocution. Tape them over, put them under rugs, or spray them with a non-toxic, bad-tasting ingredient, such as Bitter Apple.

-Many children's toys have small parts, which can be seen by pets as enticing play toys. Children should know the harm that can come to the family pet if they don't pick up and put away all of the pieces of their games and toys.

About NAPPS: NAPPS is the only national nonprofit trade association dedicated to serving the needs of professional pet sitters. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, serving as "the most respected authority in professional pet sitting." It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS' free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, and a nationwide referral service,. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS' nationwide "Pet Sitter Locator" at www.petsitters.org. For more information on NAPPS, please follow [@TheNAPPS](https://twitter.com/TheNAPPS) on Twitter or join us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.

###

Media Contact:

Linda Woody

856-642-4420

lwoody@ahint.com