Protect Your Pets from These 10 Holiday Hazards



The OHS Insider's focus is on protecting workers from safety hazards on the job'not protecting non-humans such as dogs and cats from hazards in our homes. But assuming that safety professionals are concerned about safety in general and not just at work, we're going to stray from our usual focus for a moment to take a look at safety hazards that can endanger pets this time of year.

The ASPCA compiled this list of the top 10 holiday hazards for pets. Although the list may be intimidating, safety professionals are perfectly equipped to protect their pets by using their workplace safety skills at home. In other words, using this list as a guide, conduct a risk assessment of the holiday hazards posed to your pets and then take reasonable steps to minimize or address those hazards.

10. Beware of excess wires. Keep wires, batteries and glass or plastic ornaments out of paws' reach. A wire can deliver a potentially lethal electrical shock if chewed on and a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus.

9. Noisemakers. While celebrating, it's easy to forget that loud noises and celebratory poppers or noisemakers can scare your pets. Try creating a safe place in your home where your pet can have some quiet space if needed.

8. Keep an eye out for salt. Ice melt, homemade play dough and salt-dough ornaments (even when dry) can all be a tempting

salty treat for pets, but can cause life-threatening imbalances in electrolytes.

7. Medication monitoring. If you'll be having guests stay with you, be mindful of any medication they may bring. Houseguests who are unfamiliar with pets may not realize just how curious (and sneaky) they can be. Have your guests keep any medication in a closed cabinet instead of in a bag or suitcase.

6. Watch out for candles. If you decide to give your home that extra holiday glow, be sure not to leave your pets unattended around lit candles. A long tail or a curious paw could knock over a lit candle and potentially start a fire or burn your pet.

5. Holiday eats. We recommend keeping your pets away from the table and keeping lids tightly secured on trashcans. Many of our holiday favorites can be harmful, including sweets, fatty and spicy foods, and alcohol. You also want to make sure not to give your pet any turkey or chicken bones. (Here's a full list of pet-toxic foods to keep in mind when planning your holiday menu.)

4. 'Tis the season of snow globes. Some snow globes contain ethylene glycol, a highly toxic substance to all pets (it's the same substance that's in antifreeze). If a snow globe is broken, the sweet smell can attract a pet to lick it up, leading to a potentially fatal intoxication. So keep snow globes out of paws' reach!

3. Under the tree. Wrapped presents can pose a threat to curious cats and dogs, depending on their contents. Be sure to keep any wrapped food or treats up and away from your furry friends. Just because you can't see the contents, doesn't mean your pets can't smell them.

2. Pesky plants. Although most people fret over poinsettias making their pets sick around the holidays, the truth is that these festive red plants only cause mild to moderate

gastrointestinal irritation. However, there are a couple of other seasonal stems you should be wary of: Holly and mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems when ingested; various lilies that are often found in holiday bouquets can cause kidney failure in cats.

1. **O’ Christmas tree.** If you’re planning on putting up a tree, there are a couple of things you should know:

   - Make sure that your tree is tightly secured so there’s no chance of it tipping or falling over and causing injury to your pet.
   - Keep the tree water covered and inaccessible. Tree water may contain fertilizer and other harmful chemicals’not to mention it can become a breeding ground for bacteria that could cause nausea, diarrhea or stomach upset if a pet drinks it.
   - Stay away from tinsel for decoration. Ingested tinsel can cause severe vomiting, obstructed digestive tract, dehydration and could require surgery.