

Happy Pet-Days!

■ Protect your pets from the dangers of holiday cheer.

It's that time of year once again—time for candles, Christmas trees, wreaths, tinsel, ornaments, Christmas lights and other holiday decor.

If you are a parent, you should know to take special precautions to keep your younger children away from attractive "accidents waiting to happen" like that candle that could topple when your toddler bumps into the coffee table or the beautiful hand-blown glass ornament that hangs low on your tree and is just waiting to come crashing down.

If you have a pet, you do need to take similar safety precautions to protect your pet from holiday cheer. Here are a few suggestions:

- Keep pets away from strings of lights or electrical cords. Pets can strangle themselves or chew on electrical cords and cause a fire hazard. Monitor all pet activity.
- Tie down your Christmas tree to prevent it from toppling over.
- Keep pets away from Christmas trees and ornaments where they can hurt themselves.
- Tinsel, thin ribbon and string are deadly to cats when ingested. Keep this material away from them.
- Place ornaments toward the top of the tree—away from pet's reach.
- Pets and candles don't mix. Keep pets away from candles.
- Keep pets on their regular diet. Do not include them in the diversified diet typical to humans during the holidays. Do not feed them "people food."
- When throwing a party, keep pets in a back bedroom so that they do not become overly excited or escape.
- Provide warm, secure, out-of-the-wind shelter for outdoor pets. Provide clean, warm bedding. All small animals should be kept indoors.



If you are going out of town for the holidays:

- Make sure pet enclosures are secure.
- Make sure pets have proper identification.
- Make arrangements for the care of your pets - make provisions for food, water and appropriate care in a secure environment.

Christmas should be a merry time of year. Do include your pets in your plans to ensure they too have a safe and happy holiday!

by Jackie David, Public Information Director, L.A. Animal Services

The Pet Club

Gifts for Life

■ This holiday season, think about gentleness, compassion, kindness and empathy: a gift certificate to LA Animal Services.

We've all seen photos of puppies and kittens in Christmas stockings. They make such cute photos. They make you almost want to go out the instant you see the photos and get your real live pet for Christmas – along with a bright red, velvet, gold-trimmed stocking. You sigh as you daydream and picture your family's surprise and glee on Christmas morning – a real Kodak moment – gifts of laughter and love.

You name the cute, white, fluffy dog Snowy.

Ever hear of the white elephant story? Well...this is something akin to it.

A year later, here is what the picture could really look like: Mom's tired and irritated. Snowy's grown – a lot. He's made a mess again. The kids don't want to clean it up. Snowy might be sick. Someone's got to take him to the vet. Who can afford it? Who has the time to do this? Also, Snowy's shedding all over the house – what a mess! He needs a bath. He has also outgrown the living room. There's nowhere for him to run and exercise and play but who has time to take him out to do that when the family's got a full schedule? You dare not let Snowy loose in what little yard you have for fear he will escape – again. "What to do?" Mom thinks to herself. "I just don't have the time or energy or money to keep taking care of this Christmas puppy turned mutt." Mom makes a difficult decision: The kids will just have to learn to live without Snowy. So, the next day, while the kids are at school, Mom loads Christmas Doggie into her car and drops him off at the shelter with the hope that someone will adopt him. In the end, everyone is in tears – especially the kids and Christmas Snowy.

What just happened here?

What happened is that the picture of the cute puppy and kitten in the stocking does not tell you that owning a dog or cat or other pet is a lifetime commitment – at least 15 years of time and trouble and expense. Selecting the right pet for a family, home and lifestyle is a very personal choice. It should be a family decision, as the family must be involved in the care of any companion animal. Here are some questions that should go into that choice:

- Is your family ready for a pet?
- How much time do you have for an animal? Will you have time to train and socialize it?
- Do you want an active animal or a sedentary one? A Dalmatian or a goldfish?
- Do you have time for grooming? Do you want a longhaired animal or a shorthaired animal?
- How much living space do you have? Do you have space for a large active dog or a small one? Would a less active older cat work better?

■ Do you have the money to ensure your animal sees a veterinarian?

■ Do you have children? How old are your children? Would your children be safe around the animal? Would the animal be safe around your children?

In the end, it is best to let your loved ones decide what animal works best for them. If someone you know is ready for a pet, do not buy them the animal – especially during a season that is stressful for most. (Remember that a new pet requires time and attention – a commodity that is usually in short supply during the Holiday season.)

Instead, think about giving a pet gift certificate from L.A. Animal Services.

A pet gift certificate can be used to adopt or purchase a pet from an animal shelter. When you give a pet gift certificate, you give the recipient time to think about what animal is compatible with his or her lifestyle. When ready, your gift recipient can select the perfect pet from among the hundreds of adoptable animals at any of the City's six shelters. At the same time, this right match

ensures a permanent loving home for one of Los Angeles' homeless animals.

Pet gift certificates are available in a variety of amounts and go towards adoption fees that include vaccinations, microchips, spaying or neutering and (for dogs), licensing. There is no expiration date on a pet gift certificate.

Pet Gift Certificates can be purchased at any of the city's six Animal Shelters:

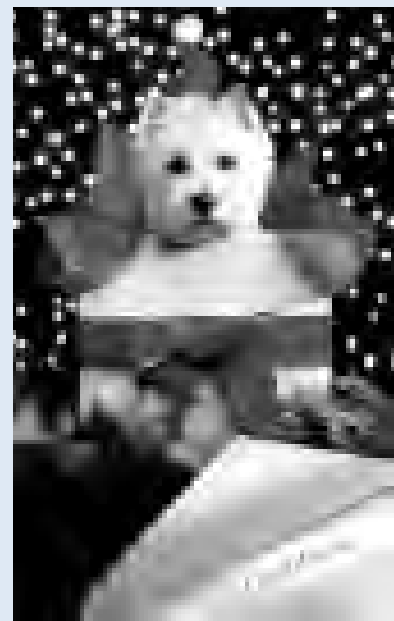
- North Central Shelter, 3201 Lacy St., Lincoln Heights
- West Los Angeles Shelter, 11950 Missouri Ave.
- East Valley Shelter, 13131 Sherman Way, North Hollywood
- West Valley Shelter, 20655 Plummer St., Chatsworth
- South Los Angeles Shelter, 3612 Eleventh Avenue, Los Angeles
- Harbor Shelter, 735 Battery St., San Pedro

L.A. Animal Shelters are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.


Another gift to consider is a donation, on behalf of the gift recipient, to the City's Animal Welfare Trust Fund. Donations enhance the quality of life for shelter animals by funding animal supplies, medical equipment, public education and improvements to Animal Shelters.

For more information, shoppers can visit their nearest Animal Shelter or call L.A. Animal Services at: (888) 4LA-PET1 ([888] 452-7381) (TTY Hearing Impaired: [877] 875-8205) or visit L.A. Animal Services at: www.LAAnimalServices.com

A gift of compassion can greatly improve the quality of life enjoyed by people and animals alike. Animals bring healing. They can teach people gentleness, compassion, kindness and empathy – what better gift than this to give at Christmas?



INVITE THE CLUB




It's Holiday Time!

Hey Clubmembers,
Alive! wants to go to your office holiday party!
 Is your office having a holiday party? Let us know, and we'll do our best to publish a small story and photos from your celebration!
 We know there are many, many parties already scheduled, and we'll do our best to get to as many as we can. So please let us know.
 Contact your Club Counselor. Look on the back page of this issue of *Alive!* to identify your Counselor.
See you at the party!

City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

**Your City.
Your club.**



Send Questions

Jackie David, Public Information Director, L.A. Animal Services

Feel free to send questions and concerns to me, and I'll be happy to respond to them in my column. I'm excited about this, so don't hesitate! Write to me at: talkback@cityemployeesclub.com

