

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Deck the Halls—with Pet-Friendly Décor!**

*NAPPS Provides Holiday Safety Advice for Pet Parents*

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J., October 9, 2012—The leaves are falling, temperatures are dropping, and the holiday season is just around the corner. Soon it will be time to hang decorations and pre-heat the oven for family fun in the kitchen. The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals, reminds pet parents that while it's easy to get wrapped up in the holiday festivities, it's important to ensure the added décor won't jeopardize the safety of your furry family members.

“Candles, wires, tinsel and other loose-hanging decorations can be fatal for a pet if left within their reach,” said John D’Ariano, president of NAPPS. “We urge pet parents to be aware of the potential risks that come along with the added décor of the holiday season. It’s important to decorate with your pet in mind and be sure any added décor is safe and pet-friendly.”

In addition to decorating for the winter season, baking is also a common holiday tradition. NAPPS reminds pet parents that while you're icing cookies, sipping cider, and enjoying your tasty treats, be aware that what is delicious to you may be dangerous to your furry family members.

Finally, before dressing Fido and Mittens in their holiday bests, be sure you take the necessary precautions to prepare your pets for the potentially stressful season. The added entertaining, out-of-town guests, decorations and cooking can certainly become chaotic and overwhelming—keep in mind that your pets are affected, too! Even a slight change in routine can be enough to overwhelm and exhaust your furry friend.

To help prepare your pets—and yourself—for the holiday season, consider these tips from NAPPS:

#### ***Reduce Stress***

Strangers and large groups in the home can create excitement—and stress—for pets. To reduce pet stress before holiday gatherings:

- Maintain regular exercise and feeding routines. Try to avoid changing your pet's daily schedule.
- Preparing for a party? Spend extra time with your pet before guests arrive. Take your furry friend on a long walk and release built-up energy!
- There's no place like home—so make sure your pet feels protected! Provide a private room or area where your animal family members can relax and avoid the crowd. Even the most outgoing pets need time to recharge their batteries!

- During a busy party, a pet placed outdoors—even by a well-meaning guest—can be forgotten and freeze. Hire a professional pet sitter who can be responsible for your furry family members. This will allow you to relax and enjoy the company of your guests, knowing Fido and Mittens are receiving the professional, quality care and attention they need.
- Dogs should be trained on how to greet guests—when greeting guests at the door, consider placing dogs on a leash.

### ***General Tips***

1. Holiday plants with berries can be toxic, cause vomiting—or worse. Keep holly, mistletoe and poinsettias out of the house, or at least out of your pet's reach.
2. Candles, incense and menorahs can all be dangerous to pets and children. Keep them out of reach or have adult supervision when lit and in use.
3. Potpourri and tobacco products left out can be toxic to pets.
4. Chocolates can be toxic and fatal to pets; forego fancy displays of chocolates if they will be unattended and easily accessible to pets.
  - Provide healthy treats for guests to give pets.
5. Prepare your guests in advance—let them know Fido and Mittens will be attending the party as well.

### ***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!

### ***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 will deal with this common problem, before it's time to decorate.
- Strategically place your ornaments on the tree. Glass ornaments and ones with metal hooks should be placed on higher branches.
- Decorations made of sweets will tempt pets—consider decorating the tree without candy canes, ginger bread, popcorn or cranberries.

- If you have a live tree, make sure pets are not able to access the water from the tree base. It will likely contain harmful fertilizers and bacteria.
- Tinsel is attractive to curious pets and if ingested, it will cause them to choke or block their intestines; consider a pet-friendly alternative decoration for your tree and around your home.

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

It's also important to remember that many children's toys have small parts, which can be seen by pets as enticing play toys. Be sure all toys, gadgets and their small parts are put away and out of reach of the family pet.

**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](http://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](https://facebook.com/TheNAPPS).

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