

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Benji, It's Cold Outside**

*National Weather Service Alters Reporting; NAPPS Encourages Pet Parents to Be Prepared for Winter Weather*

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J., November 18, 2011 – Though winter is still a month away, some states are already experiencing cold temperatures; in the coming weeks, the average high in Minnesota and the Dakotas will be in the teens and a winter storm is likely. Normally under these circumstances, a “wind chill warning” would be in effect. However, the National Weather Service for Eastern North Dakota and Northwestern Minnesota will begin using “extreme cold alerts” in place of “wind chill warnings.” As temperatures continue to drop across the country, the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS), a nonprofit trade association dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals, encourages pet parents to heed these alerts and take precautions to protect the lives of their pets.

Prior to the change in reporting, the National Weather Service would discontinue running the “wind chill warning” when wind speeds dissipated. Issuing an “extreme cold alert” will prepare people for the harsh weather with or without wind chill.

“This change will help clarify the severity of the cold weather,” said John D’Ariano, President of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters. “It is important to gain familiarity with winter storm warning messages; preparation for extreme weather is critical to the safety of our pets.”

Before winter weather hits your area, NAPPS suggests: programming local weather/radio stations into your cell phone; obtaining a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio to monitor severe weather (NAPPS provides a direct link for local NOAA’s weather alerts at <http://www.petsitters.org/>); knowing how the public is warned (siren, radio, TV, etc.) and the warning terms for each kind of emergency in your community; learning about the signs of typical winter related issues for pets, such as hypothermia; and maintaining a first aid manual for animals and a portable first aid kit.

#### Additional Safety Tips to Prepare for Winter Weather:

- Be prepared for isolation at home, particularly if you live in a rural area. It is possible that a severe winter storm could isolate you for one or two weeks.
- Stock an emergency supply of food and water for yourself and your pets. If you or your pets are on a medication regimen, be sure to always have at least a two-week supply on hand.
- Avoid leaving animals outside or confined to areas with hard surfaces (e.g., in garages).

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- Keep your car winterized with antifreeze and a full tank of gas. Carry a winter care kit that includes food and water, a windshield scraper, a flashlight with extra batteries, a tow chain or rope, a shovel, tire chains, a blanket, a bag of sand, a fluorescent distress flag and emergency flares. If you have to travel, keep a supply of high-energy foods, candles and matches with you. Keep extra mittens, hats, boots, socks, and outerwear in the car. If you routinely take your pet in the car, be sure to keep extra blankets in the car to keep the pet warm.
- After the storm, check on your neighbors and their animals. Make sure they have proper heating and sufficient supplies to get them through the emergency.

NAPPS provides a comprehensive guide to emergency planning for pet parents at its website: [www.petsitters.org/cfincludes/MemberCenter/pdfs/DPPetOwner.pdf](http://www.petsitters.org/cfincludes/MemberCenter/pdfs/DPPetOwner.pdf)

**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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