

# PROPER SHELTER

Keep your pets warm this winter! The MSPCA strongly believes it is preferable for pet owners to share their homes with their animals, particularly in the cold winter months. But if you do have a pet that is kept outside for extended periods he/she must be provided with proper shelter for the weather. Porches, crawl spaces, barrels, and motor vehicles are generally not considered proper shelter. In the cold weather, a proper shelter:

- Provides protection from the cold, wind, rain, and snow.
- Is not made of materials or constructed in a manner that may pose a risk of injury to the animal.
- Three sided, durable construction.
- Allows the animal to comfortably stand, sit, lie down and turn around in its shelter, but is small enough that the animal's body heat will warm the air space.
- Has an entrance that is proportionate to the animal using it, faces away from the prevailing winds, and is covered by a flap or door.
- Has a floor elevated several inches off of the ground that is impervious to moisture, and covered with clean, dry bedding (preferably straw).

There are many factors to consider when determining the adequacy of a shelter, including species and breed type as well as the coat length, age, and general health of the animal. What constitutes proper shelter for your neighbor's pet may not be yours.

Proper shelter is a requirement under MGL Ch. 272 Sec. 77, Cruelty to Animals.

If you see an animal outside in inclement weather without proper shelter, please contact West Tisbury Animal Control Officer at 508-684-8201 or the MSPCA Law Enforcement Department at 617-522-6008 or 800-628-5808 Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM to discuss your concern.

