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## Keeping Your Dog Warm and Safe in Your Garage

I am not a fan of leaving dogs in the garage on cold winter days/nights while we are away at work but many of us don't have a choice. Dogs with destructive behavior or mild separation anxiety can cause us to fear that we will come home to a house that looks like a war zone. Keep in mind dogs can be destructive anywhere, including a garage, so you must keep all valuables and items that can be dangerous for your dog out of reach.

Below are some ideas on making sure your dog stays warm, safe and happy in your garage:

1. Make sure their dog bed is well insulated. Buy a quality insulated bed and place an insulated quilt underneath. Another option is to buy a raised bed and place their regular bed on top of it. You can buy dog houses or use a crate and either leave the door open or take it off and put insulated bedding inside. You can place a space blanket over the top for extra insulation. Place a brick or something heavy on top of the space blanket to keep the blanket in place. Dogs who are bored or anxious may chew up loose bedding so a well-insulated bed with a tight fitting cover placed inside a crate may be the best option. Keep in mind dogs don't crate train or train to a dog house on their own. You must teach them to love their enclosure. Refer to my crate training video and article for advice. If at all possible, provide a heated bed or heating pads specially designed for your dogs to use. They have wonderful options at Bend Pet Express.
2. If you don't have a heated bed, place a space heater near the bed. Make sure it has an automatic shut off or place the heater inside an exercise pen. Bored and anxious dogs may chew the cords. Put bitter apple spray or yuck on the cords. But test them out first-some dogs actually like the taste! Another flavor dogs usually don't like is menthol -- like Bengay or Vicks Vapor Rub. You can experiment. These products need to be reapplied every two days.
3. Give your dog things to do in the garage. Several stuffed Kong toys with a little peanut butter and their kibble is the best option. You can give them a whole meal this way. If you google Kong toy recipes you can get other ideas for stuffing. Dogs can choke on chews like rawhides and bully sticks dogs and these should only be used when supervised. Most other toys just aren't interesting enough to play with all day on their own.

4. If at all possible have a well-insulated dog door leading out to an enclosed area for them to relieve themselves. If this is not possible, paper train them to go on papers while you are away.
5. Put away all chemicals so your dog cannot have access to them. Specific dangers of household chemicals are discussed in detail in other articles at this site.
6. Have a thermometer in your garage so you can monitor how cold it gets in the winter months.

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