

All dogs need proper shelter and care, but it is especially important for those that are kept outside for extended periods of time. Not all dogs are suited to be kept outside. This is true with senior dogs, puppies, small or short haired breeds. They must be conditioned slowly to the weather. Dogs kept outdoors may be exposed to weather elements such as rain, sleet, snow, and extreme heat or cold. To assist you with providing proper shelter, the City of Coon Rapids has compiled this flyer, outlining Minnesota laws and suggestions to ensure you are in compliance.

It is recommended that dogs be sheltered inside their owners' homes whenever possible. When not possible, Minnesota State Statute §343.40 requires that proper shelter must be provided.

A proper shelter must meet the following standards:

**Weatherproof Construction:** Dogs kept outside for extended periods of time must have access to a weatherproof shelter of adequate size. The shelter must be well constructed and have a

roof, enclosed sides, a doorway and a solid, level floor raised at least two (2) inches from the ground. There should be no cracks or openings in the structure other than the entrance, and it must be windproof and rainproof. Rainproof openings for ventilation are acceptable in hot weather.

**Size:** The shelter should be small enough to allow a dog to warm the interior of the structure and maintain body heat, but it should be large enough to allow the dog to stand to its full height, turn around freely and stretch out when lying down.

**Cold Weather Requirements:** Dogs need to have a comfortable, safe place to escape the cold, snow, and wind. Between November 1 and March 31 the following must be provided:

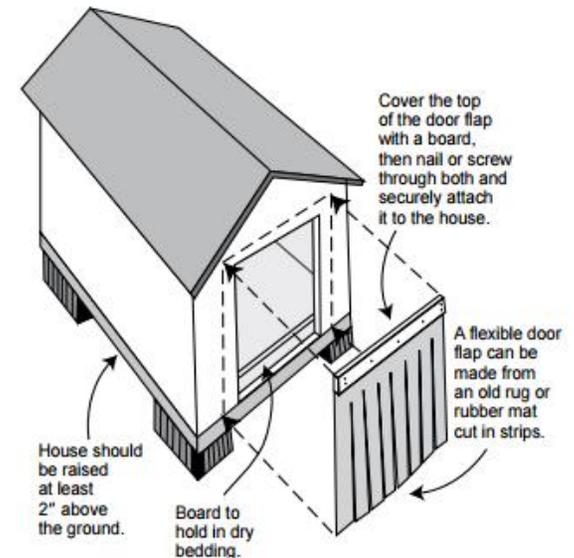
**Protected Entrance**—the shelter's entryway must be protected by a self-closing windbreak, or an offset outdoor or a flexible door flap.

**Bedding**—Sufficient amount of non-absorbent bedding such as cedar shavings, straw, or wood chips must be provided to insulate against the cold and

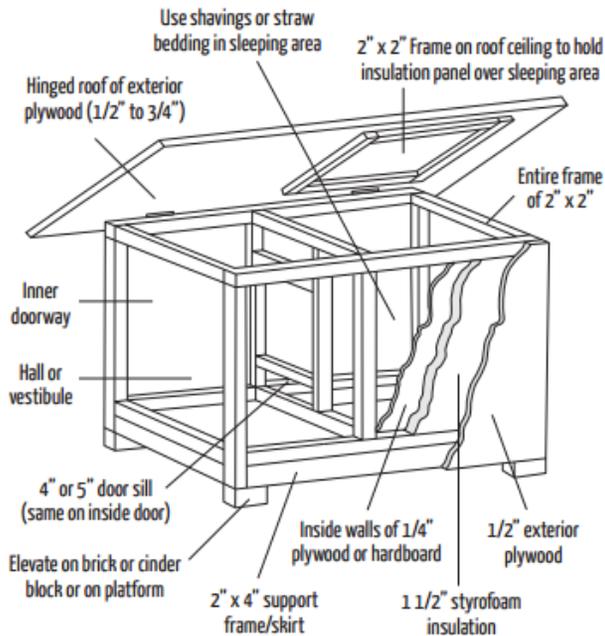
damp. All bedding should be kept dry and changed periodically.

**Warm Weather.** In warm weather or summer months, dogs need to have protection from the sun and heat. The shelter should be placed where it will be adequately shaded in hot weather. Make sure the opening to the shelter is not facing the sun.

**Commercially Available Dog Houses.** Dog houses bought at pet supply stores often need to be modified to meet the requirements. Sometimes you just need to raise them off the ground and install a weatherproofed flap (see diagram). Raised dog houses can also be purchased, but will still need a flap installed.



**Do-it-Yourself Dog Houses.** There are many plans available on-line to guide you through construction of a dog house for your pet. Whatever design you choose, be sure that it meets the minimum requirements in Minnesota State Statute. The diagram below can get you started:



**Frequently Asked Questions:**

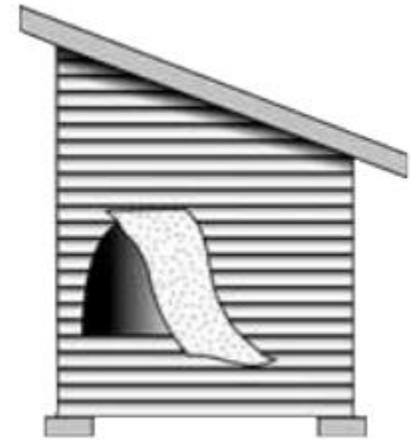
**Is a car proper shelter?** Not as permanent shelter. A proper shelter must be small enough to allow a dog to maintain body heat. Most cars are too large to meet the size requirement for proper shelter.

**Is a garage proper shelter?** Not by itself. If a garage is heated, insulated, and has an area with raised bedding it *may* be considered proper shelter, but without these modifications, a garage is too large to meet the size requirement for proper shelter.

**What happens if owners do not provide proper shelter?** Coon Rapids Animal Control Officers will visit the address and assess the situation. A warning may be left or the dog may be seized, depending on the circumstances. Owners who fail to provide proper shelter to a dog may be convicted of a petty misdemeanor.

**What should I do if I see a dog without shelter?** Contact the Coon Rapids Police Department at 763-427-1212 or call 911

**Proper Outdoor Shelter for Your Dog**



City of Coon Rapids  
 Coon Rapids Police Department:  
 Animal Control  
 11155 Robinson Drive NW  
 Coon Rapids, MN 55433  
 763-767-6481

