

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Marian Conicella, Development Manager

marianc@awanj.org

www.awanj.org

Animal Welfare Association Brings Dog Toy Safety Awareness During the Holidays

December 09, 2021

Voorhees, NJ – It's the time of the year where everyone gets toys and presents, even your best four-legged friends. There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy including a dog's size, activity level, and personal preference.

"The things that are usually the most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous," according to AWA Behavior Coordinator Liz Stanley-Reicherter.

AWA offers the following tips to look out for when picking out toys for your dog this holiday season.

- Toys should be appropriate for your dog's current size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat.
- Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed and/or ingested.
- Avoid any toy that starts to break into pieces or have pieces torn off. You should also avoid "tug-of war" toys, unless they'll be used between dogs, not between people and dogs.
- Ask your veterinarian about which rawhide toys are safe and which aren't. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears and rawhides, should be supervision-only goodies.
- Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the squeak-source and could ingest it, in which case squeaking objects should be "supervision only" toys.

AWA's behavior team recommends a variety of types of toys to encourage a more enriched playtime experience, this makes pets less bored at home and fulfills their instinct to problem solve. The best active toys include very hard rubber toys, "rope" toys and tennis balls. The best problem-solving toys are kongs with treats inside, food puzzles, and snuffle mats. The best comforting toys are stuffed toys safe for dogs, towels, blankets, or old t-shirts.

Owners can get the most out of their dog's toys by rotating them out weekly, providing a variety to satisfy their different needs. Playing hide-and-seek with toys since "found toys" are more attractive to play with in the moment. Lastly, being present in your dog's play with one-on-one time with a ball, frisbee, or other toy can increase bonding time with your pet, release excess energy, and reduce wear and tear on toys due to boredom.

For more information on AWA's pet programs, visit www.awanj.org or call 856-424-2288.

####

Animal Welfare Association, a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the wellbeing of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education. AWA is South Jersey's leader in progressive companion animal care.

