

## Pet Safety: Friends in High Rises

Whether you live in a high rise, a two-flat, a home or any living situation, if you own a pet you should always know your surroundings and think about securing the surroundings for your pet, the same way you would secure them for a young child. These concerns are amplified if you and your pet live above ground level. Every home is unique, so you should take a look at potential problem areas where accidents are more prone to occurring. Pets are basically extremely, energetic toddlers. Whatever area they can get into, they will. So you should pet-proof your home the same way you would child-proof it!

In general, here are some tips to make sure your pets are as safe as possible in high rises and above ground living situations:

- First, helping your pet get used to a high rise takes time. You should not just bring a pet into a new environment and let the pet loose! An animal doesn't always perceive height and depth the same way people do.
- CACC does not recommend allowing your pet out on your high-rise balcony under any circumstances, even if there is sufficient railing. Curious pets can jump on the railing, climb, wiggle between bars and all of these situations can lead to disasters.
- Your pet may be stimulated by birds passing by, other animals in the home or on other balconies. Your pet can even be mesmerized by the sunlight or distracted by the way light reflects against objects in the animals view.
- If you leave your balcony door open for air circulating purposes, you should invest in a secure heavy-duty screen so that your pet remains safely in your unit.
- When exiting your unit with your pet, be aware of other residents. They may have guests or pets that your animal is not familiar with and it may startle the pet or cause a negative animal interaction.
- You also want to secure cabinets and other rooms in your home where you may not want your pet to enter. A pet could get into medicine or cleaning products and become sick from ingesting something he or she shouldn't.

**A Special note from Dr. Fred Goldenson of the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association:**

*"Life in the big city can be great but it can be really dangerous if you are a dog or cat. Living in a high-rise apartment building you still have to be aware of cars and other critters outside that can hurt you. You're probably better off staying away from places like dog parks and beaches too unless you're on a leash and others are on a leash so that they can't hurt you. But living in a high-rise building has some additional worry that your other canine and feline friends in the city and country don't have to worry about. It's called the high-rise syndrome. Balconies are a beautiful place to view the city and lake but they are no place for a dog or cat, because you can fall a great distance from the balcony and if you survive you will still sustain serious injuries. So play it safe and take in the views from the window, not the balcony. And while you're at it be sure to tell your humans that you need to have your shots*

*kept up to date and have your heartworm medication given on a regular monthly basis. So enjoy the city life but be safe.”*

Check back at [www.adoptchicago.org](http://www.adoptchicago.org) periodically for more pet safety tips. Please remember to make sure your animal is vaccinated, on leash, has a city license, and remains under control at all times. Do your part to keep Chicago safe!