

# Denton Record-Chronicle

## Pets get oxygen masks



David Minton/DRC

Nancy Strack and her dog Daisy demonstrate to Denton firefighters Thursday how to use the animal oxygen masks donated to the Denton Fire Department.

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During an emergency, pets can cause great concern for their owners. In some cases, owners risk their lives to go back into burning buildings to find their pets.

That's why Daisy, a 12-year-old blue heeler mix who is part of Dog Scouts of America Troop 119, has been visiting North Texas fire departments with her owner Nancy Strack to bring the departments packs of oxygen masks.

On a recent visit to the Denton Fire Department, Strack brought eight kits — each containing masks in three sizes — to donate on behalf of the Dog Scouts of America Fort Worth-based troop. It is the largest active troop in Texas, she said, and its main goal is to teach responsible dog ownership with a human-canine bond.

“Donating these masks to help the lives of our pets is something I love to do,” said Strack, a volunteer with the organization.

Battalion Chief Brian Glenn said pet owners should never go back inside a burning structure to rescue a pet.

“Just wait until the firefighters arrive and let them know you have an animal inside and where they might be hiding — after all, you know your pet best,” Glenn said.

He said that because animals are lower to the ground, they are able to stay inside a little longer than a human.

“A lot of times an animal comes out limp,” Strack said.

Officials said this is caused not only by smoke inhalation, but what makes up the smoke, including carbon monoxide.

Oxygen masks specifically made to fit a dog or cat can be beneficial, fire officials said.

The masks fit over the snout of the dog or cat and help administer oxygen to the animal faster than a regular oxygen mask, Strack said.

She said the troop has fundraising events to make large purchases of pet masks to donate throughout North Texas.

Lewisville, Flower Mound, Roanoke, Double Oak and Haslet are just some of the other Denton County fire departments to get oxygen mask kits from the volunteer organization.

Glenn said the Denton department has a few of the masks and has been using them for about four years.

The masks are reusable, but do need to be restocked from time to time.

With the latest donation, Glenn said, the department will have nine kits. That will allow the department to keep one on every engine, a ladder truck and a battalion chief vehicle.

During a large structure fire, this would put at least four kits on the scene, officials said.

“We do use them and they have saved lives,” Glenn said. “I think having so many masks around will be helpful — most families have more than one pet.”



David Minton/DRC

Three sizes of oxygen masks, shown Thursday, will fit the snouts of everything from small to large dogs, and smaller sizes can be used on cats as well. The donation of the masks to the Denton Fire Department will allow them to now be carried on every fire truck.