

## Keeping Your Cat Safe During the Holidays

**CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers Part 2 of her common-sense tips.**

*By Jeanne Adlon*

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**Q:** What are some tips for keeping my cats safe during holiday activities?

**A:** Since we are busy shopping for friends and loved ones during the holidays, we often come home loaded with department store shopping bags. Unbelievably enough, they can pose a genuine threat, which I discovered on one scary Christmas cat-sitting call. Moon and Jet, cute charcoal-gray sisters, lived on East 85th Street, near Gracie Mansion in New York City. As soon as I arrived to take care of them, I knew something awful had happened. The house was in chaos with objects overturned and strewn all over the floor. After I caught my breath, I called out for the cats. Jet was visible but I could not find Moon.

Finally I heard a pitiful meowing under the bed and there he was — huddled with a shopping-bag handle wrapped around his neck and under his leg. It was a wonder he could breathe. Cats love playing with bags but he had obviously gotten his head entangled in the handle and in an effort to remove it, caught his paw in it as well. The chaos in the house was his panic to free himself from what could have been a noose.

By this time, Moon was completely exhausted so he put up no resistance to letting me gently pull him out from under the bed. The handle was wrapped so tight I could only use a nail scissor to cut through it. Like the story, "The Lion's Paw," this usually shy kitty let me cuddle him and make sure he was OK. Fortunately, he was. Please cut all the handles off of any shopping bags your cats may be able to reach. I am not shy about doing this myself during my house calls.

I also suggest you secure your Christmas tree well if you have a climber in the house. If your tree is live, cover the water basin at the bottom so your cat cannot drink from it. Also be careful with holiday plants, such as poinsettia, mistletoe and amaryllis, which are poisonous to cats. Caring for your kitties at holiday time allows them to safely enjoy the season along with you.