

Pets and fireworks don't mix

For many Americans and their families, Independence Day is often a day of fun and celebration. People enjoy fireworks with their dazzling displays of color and sparkle that light up the night sky along with the booming and banging that adds to the excitement. For many pets, however, fireworks make the Fourth of July the scariest night of the year. Pets nationwide panic. To animals with more sensitive hearing than ours, these noises are downright deafening. They often run out of fear and sheer terror.

July 5th is the busiest day of the year at animal shelters around the country. Pets may be found miles from their homes, confused, disoriented, exhausted, and often times injured. Dogs can go through glass windows, scale tall fences, snap chains and hurt themselves to escape. Take action now to make this a fun and exciting holiday for you and your pets.

Check out these tips for keeping them feeling safe and secure:

- Most important tip...do not take pets to fireworks displays!! Pets have bolted from owners and been hit by cars. It happens every year.
- Keep proper identification on the pet (phone number, dog/cats name, address, rabies tag, etc.) Microchips are nice but not all shelters use microchip readers. We recommend two forms of ID's.
- Exercise a dog (if you usually walk 20 minutes... extend the walk to an hour) to get rid of excess energy.
- If your pet gets upset with loud noises, experts recommend someone stay with the pet. Consult a veterinarian for tranquilizers or sedatives, if necessary.
- Keep the pets inside, if possible.
- Provide crates or "safe places" for them to hide. Maybe offer a treat, if they'll take it.
- Drown out the noise as much as possible. Close windows and doors. Play a radio or TV.
- Act normal. Experts recommend owners talk in upbeat voices and do normal activities. Dogs take cues from you. Stay calm and confident.
- If you leave a pet with a friend, please make them aware of your pet's behavior.
- Make plans ahead of evening activities of July 4th to keep your pet safe and secure.
- If your pet gets away, contact local Animal Control. Put your pets name and photo online right away. Contact local animal rescue groups for help.

We can recommend animal behaviorists or animal trainers to help noise-phobic pets deal with these fears.