

Fact sheet

Fireworks safety – caring for dogs and cats

Every year animals suffer as a result of fireworks used in Territory Day celebrations. The RSPCA and the local councils see a marked rise in pets being brought into centres having run away from home.

Animals have very acute hearing, and loud bangs and whistles may cause actual pain in their ears.

By following these simple guidelines your pet need not suffer.

- ✓ **ALWAYS** keep dogs and cats inside when fireworks are being let off.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** close all windows and doors, and block off pet doors to stop pets escaping and to keep noise to a minimum. Draw the curtains and put the TV or radio on to block out some of the noise of the fireworks.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** make sure your pet is wearing ID - even in the house. Ideally, they should have a collar and tag and a microchip, so that if they do run away they have a better chance of being returned to you.
- ✗ **NEVER** take your dog to a firework display. Even if your dog does not bark or whimper at fireworks it doesn't mean he's happy.
- ✗ **NEVER** tie your dog up outside while fireworks are being let off, i.e. outside a shop whilst you pop inside, or leave them in the garden.
- ✗ **NEVER** walk your dog while fireworks are going off. Make sure your dog is walked earlier in the day before the fireworks start. Prepare a safe place for your pet so it can feel comfortable, perhaps under a bed with some of your old clothes where it can hide when the fireworks start. If your pet does panic and hide in a corner leave it alone and do not try to coax it out. It is just trying to make himself feel safer and should not be disturbed.
- ✗ **NEVER** shout at your pet if it is frightened, as you will only make it more stressed. Ignore your pet if it paces around or whines, and do not reassure it as this will only make it think there is really something to worry about. Stay calm and act normally. Praise your pet when it is calm.

If you leave your pet alone and come back to find that it has been destructive, do not punish it as this shows it must have been terrified.

Try not to leave your pets alone during this period.

