



Fireworks advice

It is that time of year when the night sky comes alive with the flashes and bangs of fireworks. This may be an enjoyable time for you and your family, but many pets find it very stressful.

Here is some helpful advice on how to care for your pets throughout the firework season.

Recognise signs of stress in dogs

1. Panting
2. Excessive yawning
3. Drooling
4. Trembling
5. Whining
6. Pacing around and behaving very restlessly.
7. Hiding and seeking shelter
8. Refusing to eat
9. Seeking the company of people

Recognise signs of stress in cats

1. Excessive grooming and scratching
2. Urinating outside the litter tray
3. Darting around the house
4. Hiding away
5. Meowing
6. Acting aggressively towards other pets and people
7. Running away
8. Refusing to eat

Tips on how to keep your pets calm

Dogs and cats

1. Walk dogs early in the day, making sure you return home before the fireworks start.
2. Keep your pets inside during the fireworks.
3. Lock or block cat flaps to stop pets escaping.
4. Create a 'safe room'.
 - a. Close any windows and doors to block out as much noise as possible.
 - b. Draw the curtains to block out the flashes from the fireworks.
 - c. Turn on the TV (remember, during the firework season some TV programmes will have fireworks in their broadcasts e.g. Soaps).
 - d. Alternatively, turn on the radio, or play some gentle calming music.
5. Make a 'hide away'. Place a blanket, or some of your clothing, somewhere you think your pet will feel comfortable and safe e.g. under the bed.
6. Give your pet the freedom to pace around and meow or whine.
7. If your pet wants to hide, let them. Do not try and coax them out, they are only trying to find a safe place to escape the fireworks.
8. Keep calm and don't let your pets know you are worried about them, because this may increase their stress if they can sense that you are worried.
9. Stroke and talk to your pets (if they want you to).
10. Make arrangements to not leave your pets at home alone.
11. Never tie your dog outside a shop, not even if you are just popping in for a moment.
12. Never take your dog to a firework display, or leave them in a car while you watch.

If you are still concerned, consult your vet at least two weeks before the firework season.

Rabbits and guinea pigs

Your rabbits and guinea pigs can become distressed by the loud noises and flashing lights of fireworks.

1. If possible, bring your pets inside the house and keep them in a quiet room with the curtains pulled. You will need an inside cage, or large cardboard box, but make sure any other pets cannot get near the box.
2. If you cannot move your pets indoors, put extra bedding in their hutch.
3. Turn the hutch to face the open mesh door towards a fence or wall. This will help block out the flashing lights.
4. Make an extra place where they can hide. Put a cardboard box with holes in the hutch and pack with hay.
5. Cover the hutch with an old blanket to block the flashing and help to muffle the sound. Remember to make sure your pets have enough ventilation and remove the blanket in the morning.