



FIREWORKS NIGHT

For our pets November the 5th can be a very frightening experience. A little preparation can help to ensure that bonfire season is as stress free as possible.

Preparing for Fireworks - Dogs

- Try to take your dog for a walk before dusk so that they are relaxed and will not need to go out to the toilet once the fireworks start.
- Feed your dog in the mid to late afternoon, as this can also help them relax.
- At dusk ensure that your dog is safe indoors. Do not leave your dog alone if fireworks are expected
- Provide a safe place your dog can retreat to if they wish but do not shut them in – as long as it is safe allow your dog to find the place they feel most comfortable – this may be with you or it could be under a bed! You can help by providing a safe “den” such as a dog crate / box covered on three sides and with blankets for them to dig into, well in advance of the event. Encourage your dog to use and make positive associations with the den by putting treats in it.
- Drawing the curtains can stop your dog being startled by flashing lights.
- Playing music or turning up the volume on the television can help to minimise the impact of the sound of the fireworks
- If your dog has never reacted to noises before try not to react to the sound yourself or simply say in a cheerful voice “that was loud” and then try playing a game or doing some training with them to help form a positive association with the fireworks.
- Do not punish your dog for showing fearful behaviour. If they are frightened then it is OK to comfort them. Contrary to what you will often hear it is not possible to reinforce an emotion such as fear.

Preparing for Fireworks – Small Pets / Birds

- If your pet lives outside ensure that their cage / aviary is safe and soundproof it as best you can.
- Consider bringing pets inside if possible
- Offer extra bedding for pets to burrow into.

Preparing for Fireworks – Cats

- Ensure your cat is safely indoors before dusk and that all windows, doors and cat flaps are secure.
- Even if your cat does not usually use a litter tray make sure that one is available at this time of year.
- Close the curtains to minimise flashes which could frighten your cat
- Putting on music or turning up the volume on the television can help to mask the sound of fireworks
- If your cat seems quite relaxed try playing a game or offering some treats to help form positive associations.
- Ensure your cat has suitable safe places to hide if required (cats will often choose to hide in a dark cupboard or under a bed so make sure these places are accessible and also offer a selection of boxes in various locations for your cat) Do not try to move them once they have selected a hiding place.

Microchips – If your pet should manage to escape in a panic on fireworks night then a microchip could help ensure that you are reunited.

Pheromones can also help reduce your dog or cats anxiety. These are available as diffusers which can be plugged in near your pet’s safe den.

My Dog was very frightened by fireworks last year – what can I do?

If your pet has previously shown fear of fireworks or other loud noises then please contact us for advice. Sound phobias can be treated. There are medications which can reduce your pet’s anxiety and behavioural modification can change their reaction to the fireworks.

Tel: 01566 772211 for more advice or to make an appointment.

Finally if you are having a bonfire then make sure that you check for wildlife before lighting it.

