

Tips on Keeping Pets Safe During the 4th of July



1. Resist the temptation: do not take your pets to fireworks displays. Pets can be distressed by all the lights and the loud sounds even if you are there with them. Keep in mind your pet's behavior and perceptions will not be normal – they may have feelings of panic and terror.
2. ALWAYS have a license tag with additional pet identification tags on your pet. Have back up with contact information of relatives, friends, and your pet's veterinarian. Microchips are excellent, however, a neighbor or the general public will not have access to a scanner that is needed to retrieve owner information.
3. Keep your pets away from unfamiliar people and pets during fireworks parties and displays.
4. Create a safe room for your pets. Place comfortable blankets and toys. If your dog is familiar with sleeping in a crate, then give him that option. Double-check the area you choose for furniture or articles that can be knocked over. Be cautious of electric cords that can be chewed. Periodically check on your pets. Turning on the TV or radio can help.
5. Keep a normal schedule the day of the 4th. The only exception should be to take longer or more frequent walks. A tired pet will be less anxious.
6. If your pet's reaction is extreme, talk with your veterinarian about prescription sedatives or possibly boarding your pet with a veterinarian. Boarding is also the best alternative if you will not be home.
7. Accidents happen. Have your pet's medical and vaccination records on hand. Most veterinary hospitals are closed on the 4th, so be aware of emergency hospitals available to you. Your veterinarian may be able to refer you to a hospital they work with.
8. Be cautious approaching stray pets. Contact Animal Control or the Police Department if you locate a lost pet or have lost your own pet. Give a description, the location, and describe the pet's behavior. After the 4th of July, if you still have not located your pet, contact your animal shelter and neighboring shelters. Frightened pets will travel miles from home trying to escape their fears. Wildlife can also be affected by the festivities. Keep entry doors closed to your residence, including garages, sheds water heater closets, basements, and vehicle doors.
9. Keep picnic foods, alcoholic beverages, and materials such as trash, charcoal, lighter fluid, and matches out of your pet's reach. Your dog can become poisoned and very ill.
10. Keep your reactions normal. Some people believe consoling a frightened pet could reinforce the fearful behavior. You can also periodically distract your pet with a toy or pet treat and praise him or her for non-fearful behavior.

YOLANDA SAYS: IF YOU HAVE DOGS OR CATS, PLEASE READ THIS

PLEASE HAVE THE ID TAGS ON YOUR DOGS AND POSSIBLY CATS with current information - especially important this weekend.

If you bathe your dogs because you want them to look spiffy for expected company, please put their collars on immediately afterward.

The 4th of July can be the busiest time for AC (Animal Control) and lost animals. The more information on their tags the better. Please make sure phone numbers on tags are current. We have had dogs that have tags from former owners who live in Riverside. I cannot stress enough how important it is to have clear, readable and accurate information on the ID tags.

If you don't have tags, license tags work well also. Put a voice on your dog's collar so we can get them safely back to you, especially over this particular weekend.

Keep a current picture at home so you can also help animal control and the shelter to ID your pet.

Clear out your voice mails on your cell phones, so we can contact you about your pet. We often get "this voice mail box is full and is currently not accepting any more voice mails."

The more help you give us, the faster we can return your pet to you.

KERRY SHARES ANOTHER TIP TO HELP YOUR DOGS ON JULY 4

This is from my Vet. Put about 5 drops of baby oil (mineral oil) into dog's ears. It safely coats eardrum and mutes noise from fireworks that are painful and scare dogs. On the next day, wipe out ears. They will clean easily. I've done it for years and it really helps.