



Keep Your Pet Safe on the Fourth of July

Fourth of July fireworks can frighten pets, and that fear can cause a dog or cat to panic and try to escape the confines of a yard or even the house. To help protect pets during the July 4 holiday, the Dumb Friends League advises:

Keep your pet indoors on the Fourth of July in a quiet and isolated room with covered windows, such as a bathroom or basement where there are no windows, to help your pet feel safe and secure. Turn on a fan, radio or TV to muffle the sound of fireworks. These devices provide familiar indoor sounds and may help soothe your pet if he must be alone on this noisy holiday. Don't bring your pet to a fireworks display.

If you know from past experience that your pet will suffer from severe anxiety caused by the loud noise of fireworks, you may consider talking with your vet several days in advance about giving your pet a mild tranquilizer.

If your pet behaves nervously by pacing, whining or crying, distract your pet by playing with him or doing something he enjoys. Don't stroke, pet or reassure him by saying, "don't worry. It's okay." This may actually reinforce your pet's anxious behavior.

Make sure your pet always wears an appropriately fitted collar. You should be able to slip no more than two fingers beneath your dog's collar and your cat should be wearing a stretch or safety breakaway collar and an I.D. tag with your current phone number and address. Your pet should also be wearing a current license/rabies tag. You may want to talk with your veterinarian about also providing your pet with a microchip identification implant in case your pet loses his collar and tags.

If your pet does stray away from home, go to the Dumb Friends League's Lost & Found Center in Denver or Castle Rock and all other area animal shelters. The League's Lost & Found Centers are at 2080 South Quebec Street in Denver (one block north of the Quebec and Evans intersection) and 4556 Castleton Court in Castle Rock (take the Meadows/Founders Parkway exit from I-25). The Denver facility is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Buddy Center in Castle Rock is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both locations are closed on major holidays, including July 4. Addresses and phone numbers of municipal shelters are listed in the government section of the white pages telephone book. At each shelter, provide a photo and specific description of your pet. These steps will greatly increase your chances of finding your animal friend!

If you find a pet, bring the animal to the League's Lost & Found Centers in Denver or Castle Rock or to your nearest animal shelter. Place a "found" ad in your local paper and post notices around your neighborhood too.