

Keep pets safe around fireworks

By Barbara J. Koll, Best Friends Network

The Fourth of July is a time of family fun and fireworks, but for many pet people it can become a tragic nightmare.

At almost every fireworks display, you see someone who has brought their beloved pooch with them. That is generally not good idea. Fireworks displays can be stressful, disorienting and frightening for dogs. Your normally calm dog can be easily spooked and confused by the noise, crowds and bright, flashing lights and become afraid or aggressive or run off. Even if you leave your dog at home, dogs who are not normally frightened by loud noises may panic from the cumulative effects of fireworks, noisy crowds outside the house and being left alone.

Dogs and cats have an acute sense of hearing and fireworks will be particularly loud and frightening to them. Pets frequently become more sensitive to loud noises as they grow older. Even if they have not reacted in the past, they may become unexpectedly fearful.

Pets, children and fireworks can create a particularly dangerous situation as frightened animals can unintentionally hurt a child. Children may not realize that waving sparklers or setting off firecrackers could upset the family pet. Educate your children on the dangers of fireworks around pets.

Some pets don't even seem to notice fireworks or can be easily distracted from the noises with physical activities such as playing with a ball or other toy. Others do well simply by having their person nearby, talking to them and petting or holding them. Others cannot be calmed by anything because they are simply too frightened.

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