



## HOLIDAY SAFETY SERIES

# JULY 4 - FIREWORKS & YOUR PET

While America celebrates its Independence Day with traditional fireworks, many dogs and other pets across the country are terrified of the unpredictable, loud noises that come with the festivities. Their acute senses can make such times unbearable. Here are some suggestions for helping your dog cope:

### Provide a safe place

- ★ Provide a quiet place for the dog to retreat. The smaller the better – most dogs feel safer when “dened” or enclosed.
- ★ Play soothing music to help calm the animal and also to help muffle the outdoor sounds.
- ★ Keep doors, windows and curtains closed. Secure dog doors and catflaps.
- ★ Walk your dog early in the day when there is less likelihood of fireworks, to help relieve stress.
- ★ Offer a distraction if your dog accepts it – a long-lasting treat or a toy that they never otherwise see may hold their attention for a while.
- ★ Don't take your dog to any fireworks displays. Even if it's not visibly upset, doesn't mean it's happy to be there. Panting and yawning are indicators of stress.

### Be a calm leader

- ★ Don't leave your dog at home alone when fireworks are expected. More than anything, they need you for security. Dogs left alone may be destructive if frightened.
- ★ Don't cuddle or comfort a dog that is distressed – it makes you appear worried too. Let them pace and whine. Just keep your own reactions relaxed and normal. Ignore fearful behavior and praise calm or positive behaviors.

### Explore therapeutic help and get veterinary advice

- ★ A DAP (*dog-appeasing pheromone*) diffuser such as ComfortZone may help to calm your dog. These are available at most pet supply stores.
- ★ Rescue Remedy ([www.rescueremedy.com/pets](http://www.rescueremedy.com/pets)) is part of the Bach flower essences, available in the natural foods section of most grocery stores. Great for both people and pets.
- ★ *Ask your vet:* Melatonin can provide relief in many cases. Ask your vet to be sure it's okay for your dog and to get proper dosages. Use plain melatonin tablets, not sublingual or time-release.
- ★ *Ask your vet:* Vets may also suggest OTC antihistamines such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine) or Chlor-Trimeton (chlorpheniramine) as a relaxant.
- ★ *Ask your vet:* More severe cases of anxiety may benefit from drugs such as acepromazine (“Ace”).

### Just in case

- ★ Make sure your pet is wearing some form of identification in case it panics and is able to escape your home.