

SUFFICIENT WEATHER PROTECTION

Although you should provide an adequate living environment all year round, winter is a time where your pet should be especially well protected from the elements.



All pets should have a place where they feel secure. It needs to be warm, dry, comfortable and draught-free. When you provide this environment, your pet is less likely to stray.

In addition, try to keep your cat or dog in between dusk and dawn as these are the times that they are at most risk of being run over. It's also a time when cats present the greatest risk to wildlife such as birds.

When they are very young, a warm water bottle (not hot) under a blanket may help compensate for the absence of your pet's mother or litter mates.

If you happen to have, or can borrow, a large secure pen, this is ideal for providing a safe den and can hold their litter tray and bed. It is also an excellent way to introduce other animals.

FIREWORKS

Every year thousands of animals suffer as a result of fireworks being let off leading up to Guy Fawkes Night. Animals have very acute hearing. Loud bangs and whistles may cause them actual pain in their ears. We recommend that you discuss with your vet how to alleviate any problems for your pet at least 3-4 weeks before the event.

In addition, you can follow these few simple guidelines and your pet need not suffer.

How you can help

- Create a safe, comfortable and quiet den area for your pet. Ideally, this should be in a place which is furthest from the fireworks, and where your pet is used to resting. The room should be able to be darkened to hide the firework flashes.

Prepare the area in advance, with lots of comfy blankets to burrow into if it wants to, and take it there several times before the event, allowing it to settle there with a chew or toy for a while.

For dogs, using a DAP diffuser near this area can help make it a more relaxing place for your pet. It is an atomiser that mimics the natural pheromones of lactating females which promote a sense of well-being and reassurance.

Praise your pet when it uses this area spontaneously. Make sure however, that it are free to come and go to this area 24hrs per day, taking care not to lock it in the room alone. It is worth setting up the den, and starting to use the DAP at least 2 weeks before fireworks start. The den can also be a refuge to be used throughout the year.

- Leave your pet to settle if it paces around, whines or meows and tries to hide in a corner. Don't fuss over it or try to coax it out – it is just trying to find safety and should not be disturbed. However, try not to leave your pet totally alone during potentially upsetting events.
- Stay calm and act normally. Praise your pet when it is calm.
- Don't shout and don't get angry if your pet has been destructive after being left on its own while you've been out.



For cats and dogs

ALWAYS:

- Always keep your dog or cat inside when fireworks are being set off.



- Close doors and windows, and lock cat flaps to stop pets escaping outside.
- Try to minimize noise by drawing your curtains and putting on the TV or radio (but not too loudly) to block out the noise from the fireworks.

- So that they have a better chance of being returned to you if they do run away, ensure that your pet is wearing some form of easily readable identification at all times. Microchipping is by far the best option but it should at least have a collar and tag.

NEVER:

- Take your dog to a firework display. Even if your dog does not bark or whimper at fireworks it doesn't mean it's happy. Heavy panting and yawning can sometimes indicate that it is stressed.
- Tie your dog up outside while fireworks are being let off, i.e. outside a shop whilst you pop inside, or leave it in the garden or in your car.
- Walk your dog while fireworks are going off. Make sure your dog is walked earlier in the day before the fireworks start.
- Shout at your pet if it is frightened, as you will only make it more stressed.



For small animals

All small animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice, ferrets and birds) all need to be treated with special care when fireworks are being let off. These animals are very easily frightened.

- Hutches/cages and enclosures should, if possible, be brought into a quiet room indoors, or into a garage or shed. If you can't bring it inside, you should turn its hutch around so that it faces a wall or fence instead of the open garden.
- Give your pet extra bedding to burrow into so it feels safe.
- Cover all aviaries or hutches with thick blankets or a duvet to block out the sight of the fireworks and deaden the sound of the bangs, but make sure there is enough ventilation.

