



Hints and Tips on being safe this Fireworks Night.

Nicki Platt Bark Busters' behaviourist for Merseyside encourages dog owners to take extra care of their pets around bonfire night.

“Bonfire night is traditionally a time of celebration and fun,” says Nicki, “but for animals it is quite a different story. Many dogs are literally sent into a frenzy of terror when fireworks explode. Many will run madly in a blind panic, mindlessly damaging anything in their wake or worse still running out into the path of oncoming cars. Some will lose control of their bodily functions, while others will bark or howl.”

Although we cannot totally remove the fear that fireworks and storms cause, we can help our dogs to feel secure.

Some tips for caring for your dog during fireworks and storms:

- If you are going to a fireworks display, leave your dog at home where he will be the most safe and comfortable.
- If you go to an organised event, never leave your dog in the car. The ban of the exploding fireworks can be amplified in a car and could frighten your dog even more.
- Always keep proper identification securely fastened to your dog's collar in case he gets out. Talk to your vet about implanting a microchip and make sure that your contact details are kept up to date.
- Don't leave your dog outside. If you cannot bring him inside, cover his kennel with a blanket to protect him from the bursts of bright lights and loud bangs. A dog's sense of hearing is acute – Over 10 times more sensitive than humans.



- Dogs should be given a small, dark space so they can run and hide when the “fun” starts. Some dogs hide in cupboards or under the bed.
- Dogs really need a covered crate insulated with rubber-backed carpet to dull the sound and it should be placed in a safe, quiet corner of the house.
- Some dogs like to be covered up completely with a blanket, just as we would if we were absolutely terrified.
- Some dogs become destructive when frightened and anxious. If you don't use a crate, remove any items in the room which your dog could destroy or which could hurt him if he chewed them.
- Keep your dog away from the front and back doors. Your dog may be under significant stress, which could result in unnecessary injury to others or cause him to dart out the door and become lost.
- Turn on a TV or radio at normal volume to distract your dog from loud noises and help him to relax.
- If possible, stay with your pet during the majority of the fireworks. A dog often reacts more intensely to loud sounds and flashes of lights when you are not with him.
- In extreme circumstances your vet may be able to suggest a remedy that suits your particular dog.

A BIG THANK YOU TO Bark Busters who offers WheretoWalkies these very helpful dog safety tips to keep safe during fireworks and bonfire night.

WheretoWalkies would like to thank Nikki Platt for her great advice.