

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fourth of July Fireworks and Pets Don't Mix Well

Everyone loves the fun and festivities of the July Fourth celebrations. However, our pets do not have the same appreciation of these patriotic displays. Dogs, cats, horses, and even livestock can react to fireworks in ways that could potentially cause injury and even death.

During upcoming celebrations, never leave pets alone outdoors, even if tethered or in a fenced in yard. It's not uncommon for dogs to escape or injure themselves in a frenzied attempt to escape. In fact, many animal shelters report increases of stray intakes after the Fourth of July holiday due to the number of pets running away to avoid noise and excitement.

If you are planning on attending a fireworks celebration, keep pets at home. A good idea is to keep small pets indoors, in an interior room without windows. Turn on the TV or radio to provide distraction. Keep horses in their stalls if possible and consider talking with your veterinarian prescribing mild sedatives during this time.

If you **MUST** be outside with your pet during a fireworks display, make sure your pet is on a leash or in a carrier. Be sure that your pet has current ID tags and/or a microchip so that you and your pet can be easily reunited in case he/she runs off. Some pets may become fearfully aggressive due to the loud noises, so protect pets from kids who may not realize the consequences of waving sparklers or setting off home fireworks.

If your pet is fearful during fireworks, never punish this behavior but don't reinforce it, either, by trying to sooth the pet by saying things like "It's OK". Paying attention to your pet may positively reinforce the fearful behavior. If you have concerns about your animals during July Fourth celebrations, talk with your veterinarian about the best ways to keep your pets safe.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 343 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine. For more information, visit www.vtvets.org or call (802) 878-6888.