

Canada Day Fireworks Pet Safety Tips

Pets with *noise phobias*—fear of loud sounds such as fireworks, thunder and gunshot—can be very uncomfortable and stressed out from loud fireworks during Canada Day. Please remember that our pets cannot control how they react to loud noises. It is our responsibility to keep them safe and to reduce, if not prevent, their stress. You can learn to recognize the signs of noise phobias, practice fire safety and keep your pet in a safe “escape” place at home during Canada Day.

Pets with noise phobias may exhibit the following signs:

- Shaking, trembling
- Excessive drooling
- Barking, howling
- Trying to hide or get into / out of the house, fence, or other enclosure
- Refusing to eat food
- Some animals may lose bladder or bowel control or experience temporary diarrhea from prolonged stress

Please note: The signs mentioned above are *general signs*, and could be indicative of many different diseases or conditions. Please consult with your veterinarian if these signs persist after fireworks or thunder has subsided, or if you suspect that your pet may have been poisoned or is otherwise ill.

Keep pet identification current in case your pet gets away

- Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with identification tags containing current information.
- Dogs should wear nylon or leather collars only. Never place tags on training collars or “choke” chains.
- Cats should wear break a-way / safety collars.
- Microchipping your pet is always recommended. Make sure your microchip provider has your current information.
- Equally important, make sure your vet clinic has your current information.

Walk dogs before the fireworks start

Once the fireworks start, some pets are too frightened to void. They will either have an “accident” indoors or not go at all—both are stressful for our pets. Prevent stress by ensuring your pet has ample time to void outside *before* the fireworks begin.

Keep pets indoors at home and provide an “escape” place

In addition to being very stressful places for pets, loud, crowded fireworks displays are dangerous places—pets can get lost, run away and come into contact with matches, lighter fuel, open fires and fireworks (see below). It is much safer to keep your pet indoors during fireworks.

Even at home, however, pets cannot control their reaction to loud noises. Some pets will try to escape from the loud noise by breaking through windows, fences and even crates which can result in lacerations, foot pad injuries, teeth and mouth injuries or worse. To prevent this, it is very important that you create a safe comfortable environment in your home. Close all windows and cover with curtains/blinds; turn on the TV or radio, or play calming music (classical music can be very calming).

Many pets will seek a small den-like enclosure for refuge when they are scared. If you do not already have a crate, bed or similar place for your pet to retreat to during times of stress, it is recommended that you create a safe “escape” place and familiarize your pet with this place *before* it will be needed. Make sure this is in a quiet, sheltered and escape-proof area of your home. Leaving a t-shirt or sweater with your scent in this place also helps to calm your pet.

Practice Fire Safety:

Never use fireworks around pets and keep unused fireworks out of your pets’ reach

- Pets may try to sniff, eat or lick fireworks and pet hair can easily catch fire if too close to fireworks. Exposure to lit fireworks can potentially result in severe burns and/or trauma to the face and paws of pets.
- Unused fireworks are also dangerous to your pets as many types contain potentially toxic substances, including potassium nitrate, arsenic and other heavy metals.

Keep matches and lighter fluid out of your pets’ reach

- Certain types of matches contain chlorates which can damage blood cells and result in difficulty breathing. In severe cases, chlorates can also result in kidney disease.
- Lighter fluid can irritate skin. Inhalation of lighter fluid can lead to aspiration pneumonia and breathing problems. Ingestion of lighter fluid can result in gastrointestinal irritation and central nervous system depression.

Keep pets away from matches, lighter fuel, open fires and fireworks.