

## Public Protection Partnership Press Release – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

### Top Ten Tips on How to Reduce Stress in Pets during Firework ‘Season’

As we approach bonfire night and Diwali, and we’re less than 10 weeks away from New Year’s Eve! Our Animal Warden team have developed ten tips on how to keep your pets calm and safe during the upcoming firework season.

**1. Make sure your dog is well exercised and has had a toilet break well before the fireworks begin.**

You may need to make changes to your routine to accommodate this, so try and phase this in slowly in the build up to fireworks rather than suddenly. Walk your dog before dusk or, if your dog is used to multiple walks, consider taking a longer walk in the morning and replace their evening walk with some fun enrichment, playing games or practicing some reward-based training. This will help keep them entertained/distracted but is also stimulating enough that they will benefit just as much as walking!

**2. Feed your dog before the fireworks begin.**

An anxious dog may become unsettled and not want to eat (even after the scary noises have stopped). Always ensure they have access to their water bowl and that it is topped up – anxious dogs may pant more causing them to become thirstier than usual.

**3. Make sure your house and garden are secure.**

During the fireworks, fear may make your pet try to escape. Ensure all external doors and windows are kept shut and check your garden – even the smallest holes and gaps in fences that your dog wouldn’t normally pay attention to could be quick exits/escapes when frightened. (AND for leftover residue of fireworks that may have landed in your garden as these may be harmful)

**4. Ensure your microchip details are up to date and that your dog is wearing an ID tag.**

Not only is this a legal requirement but if your dog does go missing, it will greatly impact how quickly you are reunited with them. It is also best to leave their collar on all evening, just in case they do escape. It is also a good idea to put on a high-vis coat (vest, harness or similar) on your dog so that they can be easily seen if they do go astray.

**5. Create safe places for your dog/cat to hide.**

You could cover a crate and put in some of their favourite items, or build a den in a cupboard or underneath furniture. Once the fireworks start, it's best to allow your dog decide what they are comfortable doing – playing, sitting with you or hiding away. Don't force them to come out of their hiding place, allow them to stay where they feel safe.

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/advice-for-owners/autumn-winter/how-to-build-a-doggy-den>

**6. Draw the curtains and turn on the television or radio.**

This will help to mask the sounds and block out flashing lights. This can help them cope and by gradually increasing the volume throughout the day so that the noise isn't so sudden.

#### 7. Check your local event pages / talk with neighbours

There may still be some firework events happening even during the COVID pandemic, so check for local events. This will enable you to prepare for when there will be bigger displays nearby and give you an idea of what time they will start. Neighbours and other residents in your street should let you know if they are planning on setting off any fireworks at home, but it's always good to check if you're unsure.

#### 8. Try using calming sprays, supplements and/or vests.

There is a large array of different things out there to help pets cope in stressful situations. Calming sprays or diffusers produce a scent which helps create a more relaxing environment for your dog. Similarly, natural supplements and remedies can help to make them to feel more at ease. You can also get anti-anxiety vests such as ThunderShirts \*, or make your own out of a scarf or piece of material.

#### 9. Avoid leaving your pet/s home alone.

They will be much more comfortable with you around to give your dog comfort if they seek your reassurance. You should aim to remain relaxed and therefore provide a good role model to your dog when they are afraid – interact with them calmly.

#### 10. Do not punish your dog for unusual behaviours, or reacting to the fireworks as it will just exaggerate their fear – allow them to do what they are comfortable with.

For more advice and information see following links:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/webContent/staticImages/Infographics/FireworksInfographic2.png>  
<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/health-and-care/a-z-of-health-and-care-issues/fireworks/>

ALL ANIMALS

[https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/blogs/how-keep-pets-safe-during-fireworks?gclid=EA1aIQobChMI44ra4q6x7AIVQbDtCh3H7A3ZEAAYAAEgKytFD\\_BwE](https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/blogs/how-keep-pets-safe-during-fireworks?gclid=EA1aIQobChMI44ra4q6x7AIVQbDtCh3H7A3ZEAAYAAEgKytFD_BwE)

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#### Notes:

The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) is a shared service delivering Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards to over 450,000 people and 10,000 businesses on behalf of three authorities (Partners), Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

These services encompass a wide range of areas of responsibility from environmental protection to fair trading, food safety to animal health, housing standards to taxi licensing, and more.

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**Images:**



