

## POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES

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### Fourth Of July Safety Tips For Pets

The Fourth of July is one of the most dangerous holidays of the year for animals. Many shelters report that July 5<sup>th</sup> is one of their busiest days of the year, as they see an influx of animals who became lost after panicking and trying to escape the noise of firecrackers the night before. Outdoor animals are especially at-risk, because they break through gates and jump fences in a frenzy to get away from the noise and flashes of light. To make matters worse, they're often disoriented, and wind up being hit by cars or wandering far from home. You can dramatically reduce the likelihood that your pets will become tragic holiday statistics by using the following simple suggestions.

#### Keep Your Pets Indoors



- **DO NOT leave your pets outdoors**, even on a chain or in a fenced yard. Every year, outdoor animals panic at the sound of fireworks and break through chains, jump fences and dig out of yards, ultimately being hit by cars, becoming lost, or falling into the hands of people with cruel intentions.
- **DO bring your pets indoors**, preferably in an isolated room with the curtains drawn so that fireworks can't be seen. Turn on a TV, radio or fan to drown out fireworks. Give your pets toys and treats to keep them occupied and distracted. Make sure your pet doesn't slip out the front door in a panic when the fireworks begin. If you have to take your dog out to go to the bathroom, make sure she's on a leash, so that she doesn't bolt.
- **DO NOT leave your pet home alone**. If you're going out of town, leave your pet with a boarding kennel or family member.

#### Don't Take Your Pets To Fourth Of July Festivities

- **DO NOT take your pets to parties, picnics, parades or fireworks displays**. The best place for your pets is safe inside your house. The noise, crowds and heat at Fourth of July festivities will be overwhelming to your pet, and can lead to her becoming lost, injured or killed.
- **DO NOT leave your pet in the car while you're at holiday festivities**. Every summer, animals left in parked cars suffer brain damage and die from heat stroke. On a warm day, the temperature in a car can reach 120 degrees in a matter of minutes, even if the windows are cracked.

#### Keep Your Pets Away From Firecrackers And Dispose Of Firecrackers Properly

- **DO NOT take your pets to fireworks displays**. The noise and lights from fireworks displays can cause animals to panic and flee. In addition, your pet can suffer burns, hearing loss and eye damage from fireworks explosions.
- **Dispose of all fireworks** by putting them in a trashcan that animals can't open, to avoid your pet eating leftover firecracker fragments and becoming seriously ill.

**Make Sure Your Pet Has Proper Identification**

- **Microchips and collar tags are your pet's ticket home, should she become lost.**
  - Your pet should be wearing a collar at ALL times (EVEN INDOOR PETS). You should be able to slip no more than two fingers beneath the collar. This collar should have a tag with your pet's name and your home phone number. You can have a tag made in less than 5 minutes at virtually any pet store for about \$6.
  - Your pet should also be microchipped. If your pet isn't already chipped, make an appointment with your veterinarian before the Fourth of July. It's an inexpensive, easy procedure that takes just minutes and could save your pet's life.

**Talk To Your Veterinarian About Medication**

- If your pet becomes overly excited by loud noises, talk to your veterinarian about whether your pet would benefit from a sedative or tranquilizer. Severe stress can cause health problems in animals, just like it can in people.

**What To Do If Your Pet Becomes Lost**

- Visit all of your local animal shelters IMMEDIATELY. Bring a photo and a detailed description of your pet.
- Place ads in your local newspapers IMMEDIATELY. Many will run these ads for free.
- Hang posters in your neighborhood, and tell your neighbors to be on the lookout for your pet.

**What To Do If You Find A Lost Pet**

- Bring the animal to a local animal shelter IMMEDIATELY.
- Place "found" ads in your local newspapers IMMEDIATELY. Many will run these ads for free.
- Hang posters in your neighborhood with a photo and description of the found animal.
- Visit neighbors and describe the pet you found, because it may be their beloved animal.

**Suggested Reading**

- The Humane Society of the United States, "Enjoy Fireworks On The Fourth, But Leave Your Pet At Home," [http://www.hsus.org/press\\_and\\_publications/press\\_releases/enjoy\\_fireworks\\_on\\_the\\_fourth\\_but\\_leave\\_your\\_pet\\_at\\_home\\_2.html](http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/press_releases/enjoy_fireworks_on_the_fourth_but_leave_your_pet_at_home_2.html)
- iVillage, "Fourth Of July Precautions For Pets," <http://home.ivillage.com/homekeeping/pets/0,,rnm00.html>

**Important Note:** Indiana-PAW's POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES is intended to provide quick tips to help citizens address common pet health and behavior questions. It is not intended to replace consultation with one's veterinarian and/or a trained behavior specialist.