

Ontario SPCA shares tips to prevent lost and frightened pets during Canada Day fireworks



With the long weekend approaching, the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society is reminding the public that fireworks can be frightening to animals, and to take extra precautions to prevent lost pets.

Unexpected loud noises and flashing lights can make furry companions feel anxious, and some animals will even run away in fear, or become injured with escape attempts. Here are some top tips for pet parents to keep animals calm and safe if there are fireworks taking place in your neighbourhood:

- ? Keep animals indoors during firework displays, making sure to close windows and doors. If you need to take your dog outside, keep them leashed to prevent them from bolting and becoming lost.
- ? Ensure your pet wears a properly fitted collar and ID tags. Microchipping is also encouraged to help increase the chances of being reunited if they become lost.
- ? Walk your dog before it gets dark to avoid going outside once the fireworks start.
- ? Have a safe place for your pet to feel at ease.
- ? Block out flashing lights by keeping curtains and blinds closed or by placing a blanket over your animal's crate or safe space.

? Turn on the TV or play quiet music to help mask the noise.

? Having familiar scents for your pet can help to reduce stress from the smells of firework displays.

? Even if your dog doesn't show signs of distress, resist the urge to bring them with you to watch a fireworks display. Dogs are far more sensitive to the sounds and smells produced by fireworks than we are and would be happier in the quiet of their home.

? If you have an animal who has a history of fear with fireworks, consider speaking to your veterinarian about support options.

If you do become separated from your animal, immediately search your property and contact your neighbours. Leave your phone number and pet's description or photo with them. Place items with a familiar scent outside your home, such as your dog's bedding. You should also contact your local Ontario SPCA animal centre, humane society or animal control to see if someone has found your furry friend.

?We know how distressing it can be for families to have a beloved pet go missing,? says Kassie Dickson, Animal Behaviour Coordinator with the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society. ?Take extra precautions this weekend, especially if you're visiting somewhere your pet might not be as familiar with, such as a cottage or campground. It only takes a second for your pet to become frightened by fireworks and run away.?

For more long weekend safety tips, as well as tips to help find a lost pet, visit ontariospca.ca