

4th of July Safety Tips for You and Your Pets

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY - The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter reminds pet owners about safety on the Independence Day holiday.



According to the shelter, more animals are lost during the 4th of July celebrations than any other time of the year. Officials said it's because pets try to escape from the loud firework noises.

The following guidelines were provided by the shelter to keep your pets safe.

- Don't take your pet to fireworks displays. The explosions of the fireworks are loud to the human ear. Imagine how loud it sounds to your dog, who can hear sounds up to 60,000 cycles per second -- that's three times greater than the human ear can even register.
- Do not leave your pet in the car. With only hot air to breathe inside a car, your pet can suffer serious health effects, even death, in a few short minutes. Partially opened windows do not provide sufficient air, but do provide an opportunity for your pet to be stolen.
- Keep your pets indoors in a sheltered, quiet area. Some animals become destructive when frightened, so be sure you've removed any items your pet could destroy or may be harmful to your pet if chewed. It's important that they have a safe, quiet "den-like" place to relax, such as a secure room of the house or blanketed crate. Leave a television or radio playing at normal volume to keep him/her company if you go out. Shut windows and blinds or curtains.
- Exercise your pet. Tire your dog or cat out with plenty of exercise early in the day.
- If you know that your pet is seriously distressed by loud noises like thunder, consult with your veterinarian before July 4th for ways to help alleviate the fear and anxiety he or she will experience during fireworks displays.
- Never leave pets outside unattended, even in a fenced yard or on a chain. In their fear, pets who normally wouldn't leave the yard may escape and become lost, or become entangled in their chain, risking injury or death.
- Make sure your pets are wearing identification tags so that if they do become lost, they can be returned promptly. Animals found running at-large should be taken to the local animal care and control center, where they have the best chance of being reunited with their owners. Two forms of ID are always best when it comes to protecting your pet. If an individual finds your pet, the first thing he or she will look for is an ID tag. In Santa Cruz County, if your pet is taken to Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, he/she will be scanned for a microchip, which is permanent identification. Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter offers microchips pets for \$15 everyday, no appointment necessary.