

# Fourth of July Hazards



Fourth of July fireworks can frighten pets, and that fear can cause a dog or cat to panic and try to escape the confines of a yard or even the house.

## To Help Protect Pets

Keep your pet indoors on the Fourth of July in a quiet and isolated room with covered windows, such as a bathroom or basement where there are no windows, to help your pet feel safe and secure. Turn on a fan, radio or TV to muffle the sound of fireworks. These devices provide familiar indoor sounds and may help soothe your pet if he must be alone on this noisy holiday. Don't bring your pet to a fireworks display.

If you know from past experience that your pet will suffer from severe anxiety caused by the loud noise of fireworks, you may consider talking with your vet several days in advance about giving your pet a mild tranquilizer.

If your pet behaves nervously by pacing, whining or crying, distract your pet by playing with him or doing something he enjoys. Don't stroke, pet or reassure him by saying, "don't worry.

It's okay." This may actually reinforce your pet's anxious behavior.

Make sure your pet always wears an appropriately fitted collar. You should be able to slip no more than two fingers beneath your dog's collar and your cat should be wearing a stretch or safety breakaway collar and an I.D. tag with your current phone number and address. Your pet should also be wearing a current license/rabies tag. You may want to talk with your veterinarian about also providing your pet with a microchip identification implant in case your pet loses his collar and tags.

## If Your Pet Gets Lost

These steps will greatly increase your chances of finding your animal friend:

- Check with people in your neighborhood. Talk to your neighbors, mail carriers and newspaper delivery people, anyone who spends time in your neighborhood who might have seen your pet.
- Make a poster. Include a description and photo of your pet. Offer a reward. It doesn't have to be large, but any reward may motivate people to help the search. Decide what you think is a fair amount. Include your telephone number.
- Put your poster up around town. Post it on street corners and in area shops. Many places like libraries and supermarkets have bulletin boards that you can post it on.
- You can post a report on Petfinder.com.
- Go to The Maryland SPCA website ([www.mdspca.org](http://www.mdspca.org)) and complete a Lost Dog Report or Lost Cat Report and submit it to us. You can also come into our adoption center to fill one out. We review all reports and see if they match any found animals that come into our facility. Reports are kept on hand for up to two months. Please note that we do not share our lost and found reports with other agencies. Contacting other shelters will increase your chances of finding your pet.
- Call other local animal shelters to check if they have your animal. If not, ask if you can leave a description along with your telephone number in case your pet turns up there. Even better, go to the shelter and look for your pet. At each shelter, provide a photo and specific description of your pet. Visit our website ([www.mdspca.org](http://www.mdspca.org)) for a list of local shelters

## If You Find a Pet

- Use common sense when approaching any unknown animal. He may be hurt. He probably is hungry and frightened and may be unpredictable.
- Be careful about bringing any unfamiliar pet into your home, especially if you already have animals.
- Check the classified section for lost pets. Some newspapers accept lost and found pet ads for free.

- If you can't hold onto the animal while you search for its owner, call your local Animal Control agency or take the animal to the closest animal shelter.
- If you can hold onto the animal while you search for its owner, please visit our website ([www.mdspca.org](http://www.mdspca.org)) and complete a Found Dog Report or Found Cat Report and submit it to us. Please note that we do not share our lost and found reports with other shelters or animal control facilities. Please also contact other area shelters to notify them that you have found an animal.
- Take the animal to a veterinarian or animal shelter to scan for a microchip that contains information that will link the pet to the owner.
- Check the animal's underside for a tattoo. The Maryland SPCA tattoos all pets in our adoption center with a number and keeps a registry linking the number to the pet's owner.

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