Pets and fireworks advice

The Law

• Unless the retailer has a special licence, fireworks for private use can only be sold between 15 October and 10 November, 26 to 31 December and three days before Diwali and Chinese New Year.

• Fireworks cannot normally be set off by a private individual between 11pm and 7am. They can be let off until midnight on 5th November and until 1am on New Year’s Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Your Pet

• Not all pets are afraid of fireworks, but if this is the first firework season you have experienced with your pet, keep an eye out for signs of stress and anxiety.

• Always keep your pet indoors when fireworks are being let off and never take your dog to a firework display.

• If possible, avoid leaving your pet alone if you know there will be fireworks nearby. If you cannot be home, do not get angry with your pet if you find they have been destructive while you were out.

• Close all windows and doors, draw the curtains, switch on the lights and put on the television or radio, all of which will block out some of the noise of the fireworks.

• If you need to take your dog out to relieve himself, don’t go too far from the house and keep him on the lead. Provide a litter tray for your cat indoors.

• Make sure your dog or cat has a collar and ID tag on all evening just in case they are so stressed that they escape. It is also worth considering having them microchipped.

• Give your dog plenty of exercise earlier in the day so he is relaxed and tired by dusk.

• Prepare a ‘den’ for your pet with their favourite blanket or bed where they can feel safe and comfortable if they want to hide away.

• Let your pet pace around, whine or hide away if they want to. Don’t coax them out or disturb them – they will come out when they are ready.

• Don’t try to cuddle or comfort a distressed pet as they will think you are worried too. Stay relaxed, act normally and praise any calm behaviour.

• If it helps, occupy your pet with toys, games and food filled toys.

Think Ahead

• If you know your pet will struggle to cope with the firework season, speak to your vet well in advance about pheramone diffusers, homeopathic remedies or in very severe cases anxiety reducing drugs.

• Be proactive in finding out when local firework events are taking place, including asking your neighbours, so you can make sure you are in on those nights.

• As a longer term solution to help your pet cope, you can consider using one of the specially produced CDs of firework noises, but this is a lengthy desensitisation programme so needs to be started well ahead of the firework season.

The National Animal Welfare Trust operates rescue and rehoming centres for cats, dogs and other domestic pets in Berkshire, Cornwall, Essex, Hertfordshire and Somerset.

To find out more or to support our work visit www.nawt.org.uk