

BEHAVIOUR TIPS

For Bonfire Night – Dogs



Bonfire Night can be very distressing for many pets and the following suggestions are being made by the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) to help minimise any potential stress.

Preparing for Fireworks

- Try to take your dog for a walk before dusk so that they are relaxed and will not need to go out to the toilet once the fireworks start.
- If your pet was to panic and escape during the fireworks season a Microchip can help to ensure that you are reunited.
- Feed your dog in the mid to late afternoon, as this can also help them relax.
- At dusk ensure that your dog is safe indoors. Do not leave your dog alone if fireworks are expected.
- Provide a safe place your dog can retreat to if they wish but do not shut them in – as long as it is safe allow your dog to find the place they feel most comfortable – this may be with you or it could be under a bed! You can help guide this choice by providing a safe “den”, such as a dog crate / box covered on three sides and with blankets for them to dig into, well in advance of the event. Encourage your dog to use and make positive associations with the den by putting treats in it.
- Drawing the curtains can prevent your dog being startled by flashing lights.
- Playing music or turning up the volume on the television can help to minimise the impact of the sound of the fireworks.
- If your dog has never reacted to noises before try not to act as if there is something to worry about. Simply say in a cheerful voice “that was loud” and then try playing a game or doing some training with them to help form a positive association with the fireworks.
- Do not punish your dog for showing fearful behaviour. If they are frightened then it is OK to comfort them. Contrary to what you will often hear it is not possible to reinforce an emotion such as fear.

My Pet was very frightened by fireworks last year – what can I do?

Call a member of the APBC or visit our website www.apbc.org.uk