



animalwelfareleague

Fireworks & Thunderstorms – How can I protect my pet?

Fireworks and thunderstorms have always been a cause for concern to pets and their owners. In a recent thunderstorm 55 dogs came into the Animal Welfare League Shelter at Wingfield in a matter of hours. Pets don't understand that the loud noises they are hearing are not going to hurt them and they will often go to extreme lengths to escape from what is scaring them.

It is important to maintain a heightened awareness of the risk to pets, in particular this includes:

- Preferably keeping all pets inside, especially if owners are away from the home. It is important they are in an area away from large windows or glassed areas; otherwise they could go through the window causing serious bodily damage. Leaving pets in the laundry, bathroom or similar with their bed and the radio on is suggested.
- Ensure yards and fences are as "escape proof" as possible and all gates are secure.
- It is a good idea to give your pets a chew toy or raw bone to distract them from the noise.
- It is very important not to make the mistake of comforting your pets and telling them that it's OK because that can often make the problem worse. What you do need to do is show them there is nothing to be scared of and to carry on as normal, even be more happy and bright than usual. If you comfort them then you are reinforcing the dog for behaviour you don't want and it can also make them more afraid.
- If you're away from home, leave your pet with a friend or family member who will be at home.
- Ask a friend or family member to check on your pet to make sure they're OK.
- Ensure the pet has up to date identification. A collar with identity tag giving pet's name and owner's contact telephone number is a minimum. A mobile number is a good idea and the current temporary number if away on holidays. Please remember, dogs should also have their current Council registration tag on the collar. All dogs must be registered from 3 months of age by law.
- Microchipping your pet is another good idea. All Local Councils, vets and major shelters have microchip scanners and all pets that come into these shelters are scanned. Please remember to keep your contact details up to date.
- If your pet is lost, do not delay. Contact Local Councils and vets in the area and the major shelters. For more contact details visit <http://www.animalwelfare.com.au/hotline.html>

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