

Stress signals

You know your pet better than anybody and will often notice changes in behaviour in traumatic situations. During the firework season many pets become stressed and fearful and the symptoms to look out for include:

Dogs

- Trembling and shaking
- Clinging to owners
- Barking excessively and other vocalisation
- Cowering and hiding behind furniture
- Trying to run away
- Soiling the house
- Pacing and panting
- Refusing to eat
- Destruction
- Excessive licking



Cats

- Cowering and hiding behind or on top of furniture
- Trying to run away
- Soiling the house
- Refusing to eat



Making a den for your pet

Doggie dens

The den is ideally sited in the centre of the house away from outside doors, windows, or flat roofs and positioned in a corner of a room that the dog likes being in.

Good places for a den include

- In the bottom of the wardrobe
- Behind the sofa
- In the under stairs cupboard
- In an indoor kennel or cardboard box
- Under stairs cupboard



To help insulate the sounds you can lag underneath and cover over. Ideally fill the den with blankets or a duvet so the pet has opportunity to bury under.

To increase comfort remember to include a cloth with your fresh scent on it and use D.A.P.[®] products to calm your pet, available as diffusers, collars or sprays.

Never force the dog into the den or shut in, fix open or remove the door if necessary. The dog should want to feel secure

and comfortable in the den so should go in by choice.

To teach your dog to use the den of its own accord you need to make sure it has good associations with it, so you could

- Feed meals in the den
- Place treats, chews, stuffed kongs or toys for the dog to find in the den
- Praise & reward dog when he goes to den
- Ensure dog has access to den at all times

When the fireworks come your dog will be happy to go to his cosy den and he will feel less anxious.

Feline hideaways

Cats also need somewhere safe to hide, they like places such as

- Top of wardrobe
- Shelves of cupboard
- Bottom drawer
- Under the bed

Just like with dogs, ensure you cat always has access to its hideaway, and provide blankets to hide under. You can also plug in a Feliway[®] diffuser nearby or use Feliway[®] spray to calm your cat.

Top tips to help your pet cope in firework season

1. Allow your pet to retreat to its favourite hideaway.
2. On the evenings you expect fireworks, ensure your pet is safely inside and secure doors, windows and cat flaps.
3. Make sure your pet is microchipped. If they do escape, frightened, confused animals can easily get lost.
4. In the run up to the firework season, ensure dogs are used to being taken for walks early in the evening and cats are provided with litter trays both before and during the firework season.
5. Draw curtains to reduce the noise from outside and play music or have the TV on to help mask the noise of fireworks.
6. Ignore any fearful behaviour and do not try to comfort your pet. Dogs will pick up on your anxiety and this can make the problem worse. Cats prefer to be left to cope on their own.
7. Do not punish your pet. This only confirms that there is something to be afraid of.
8. Try not to go out while the fireworks are going off. Seeing you acting normally will help your pets feel more settled.
9. Speak to your vet for advice, therapies are available and we can refer you to a qualified behavioural therapist if required.