



Wichita Police Department
Public Information Unit
455 N. Main Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 268-4420 FAX (316) 858-7704
www.wichita.gov
Gordon Ramsay, Police Chief



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CONTACT: Lt. Brian Sigman, Commander Animal Services Section

Alternate Contacts: Animal Services Supervisor Dennis Graves, 350-3360
Animal Shelter Supervisor Drew Bessey, 350-3366

FIREWORKS AND PETS

Independence Day is a time for celebration; however it can be the busiest time of the year for Animal Control. While most pets are unaffected by the sights and sounds of the 4th of July, many of them find the loud noises and lights associated with fireworks disturbing and a cause for major anxiety. A few animals find it terrifying and will sometimes do whatever they can to get away from the unusual and scary environment including breaking out of their yards and running away. This can cause traffic hazards, impoundments and pet injuries. Planning to take some preventative steps now can help pet owners and their four footed friends avoid this anxiety or at least minimize it. If you know your pet has issues associated with loud noises (such as thunderstorms, for instance) do what you can to minimize their exposure to the popping and banging once the celebrations begin.

- * If you can, bring outdoor pets inside to a quiet area of the home until the activity has subsided.
- * If the animal is properly crate or kennel trained, they look at that space as a safe haven or “den”. Have the animal rest in their crate or kennel and place heavy blankets over it to darken the space and create a quiet safe sanctuary until it’s more bearable for the animal.
- * If inside confinement is not feasible, make sure escape routes are secured and take extra precautions around gates and doorways so an opportunistic pet doesn’t dart out.
- * Spend ample time with the animal playing prior to the parties and feed it well. A tired pet with a full belly is usually less active and less prone to stress, and may even nap right through.
- * Once the noises begin, if the animal begins to act anxious, comfort it. Pet it and talk to it in reassuring tones. Pets look to us for “help” in anxious situations. Doing your best to let the animal know “it will be O.K.” will sometimes lessen their anxiety.
- * Pet supply stores offer anti-anxiety devices such as special wraps that mimic the soothing effect some dogs get from being held to help reduce the anxiety and stress the noises from fireworks causes (These devices may help with a pet that is sensitive to thunderstorms too).
- * In extreme cases your veterinarian may be able to prescribe anti-anxiety medications to your pet to help get your companion through the rough spots.

Fourth of July activities are supposed to be fun and exciting. A few simple steps taken beforehand can insure that your furry family members are reasonably stress free and stay at home where they belong during the festivities.