



Dogs and the 4th of July

This is one day that is frightening for dogs, and it is also a day that leads to much stress and runaway dogs. Loud sounds can be a trigger for dogs to run or panic. Fireworks, screeching, bangs, and other loud noises that are foreign to the dog's understanding elevate your dog's drive and can cause them to panic, run, become highly distressed, wet the floor, tear up things, pant out of control, hide among other behaviors. Since it is such a sporadic behavior there is very little we can do to prepare our dogs for the event other than *deal with it*. There are dogs that can be trained to deal with such sounds; i.e. police dog training or in training dogs to deal with high stress situations... However, our companion pets will more than likely just need to learn to deal with it, which means we should be equipped to deal with it for them.

Some things to bear in mind are:

1. If at all possible, do not leave your dog alone, especially outside during these events. If you must leave them alone, leave them inside with a TV or radio playing.
2. If you stay with your dog, don't coddle them when they are scared. Be strong, talk with a normal voice and be indifferent to the sounds. Your strength is theirs.
3. Have a TV or radio on to buffer the noise.
4. Keep the windows closed to keep the noise down.
5. Don't take your dog for a walk during the fireworks. Be sure to do so before they begin to avoid wetting in the house.
6. Feed your dog long before the events start.
7. Give your dog a toy to play with, a bone or something to keep their mind off of what's going on outside. A stuffed KONG is always a good option.
8. If your dog runs to you every time he hears a noise, don't re-assure him with a soft – sweet voice. Use your normal voice and show him strength. Laugh and be playful. Be indifferent to what's going on. Don't ignore him – but don't coddle him either.
9. If you can keep the noise level in the house above the noise level outside, your dog may still hear things, but it will be muted and he may deal with it better.

Remember, your dog's hearing is 100 times better than yours. Just because you can't hear it doesn't mean he can't.

10. Keep doors closed. This is one of the busiest times at shelters for runaways. Even if your dog has never shown a proclivity to run, this may be the time.

Be Aware!

11. Some people like using a holistic nerve drop like Rescue Remedy. If you decide to give this, do so in small amounts and do it at least an hour before any events start.

The key thing to remember is that your dog sees things differently from you. If a dog has fear issues toward something you think is stupid, it's you who is at fault not your dog. You cannot expect your dog to understand something he has no clue about, it's not in his mental capacity. Pets are our responsibility. If you can't step up to take the responsibility, consider a stuffed animal.

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