

MEDIA RELEASE

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Promoting
Responsible
Dog
Ownership



Fireworks not a blast for dogs at home

-Helping dogs fight firework fear-

While the beginning of the New Year is traditionally celebrated Australia wide with spectacular firework displays, dog owners face the annual problem of preparing their pets for flashes and bangs that distress their pets. Dogs have an acute sense of hearing and become distressed during fireworks displays. Some dogs escape during the night, roaming the streets to be hit by cars, or become lost and end up in animal shelters or pounds.

“A few dogs have nerves of steel and don’t mind the flashes and bangs. Others can turn into trembling wrecks whenever a storm or firework display is close. ‘Noise Phobia’ is common in dogs, and scared dogs will do whatever they can to get away from the noise.”, warns veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesperson **Dr Peter Higgins**.

“I have seen dogs break through glass windows and claw through screen doors out of fear. Dog owners that plan to leave their dogs at home need to provide a safe and secure environment for their pets during fireworks displays this New Years Eve. Something simple like leaving the television or radio on, is a good idea.”, says **Dr Higgins**.

Since dogs have an acute sense of hearing, firework displays and storms are their worst enemy, which is why Noise Phobia is common in dogs. Symptoms include cowering, whining, trembling, hiding, and trying to get close to their owner. Dogs can also hurt their teeth and claws when trying to escape.

Dogs NSW suggests the following tips for owners planning on leaving their dogs alone this New Year’s Eve:

- Create a refuge that is as far away from the noises as possible, preferably an interior room, with plenty of blankets that gives your dog somewhere to hide.
- Play moderately loud rhythmic music to mask noises from the outside world.
- Provide water and some dog snacks to keep your dog occupied.
- Make sure your dog is clearly identifiable and micro-chipped in case he or she escapes.

“Some owners actually give their dogs sedatives. This is a mistake and can often heighten sensitivity to the noises. In some cases it can make things worse.”, advises **Dr Higgins**.

“If a noise phobia becomes a continual problem, contact your vet for help. Behavioural therapy used in conjunction with common sense can prevent prescribed medications being used to treat Noise Phobia in dogs. Preparation is the key to ensure that everyone welcomes the New Year stress free,” says **Dr Higgins**.

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