



July 4 safety

Fireworks, picnics and other Fourth of July traditions can be great fun for people; but all of the festivities can be frightening and even dangerous for animals. Noisy fireworks and other celebrations can startle animals and cause them to run away; holiday foods can be unhealthy; summer heat and travel can be dangerous; and potentially dangerous debris can end up lying on the ground where pets can eat or play with it.

Whether or not you're planning your own Independence Day celebration, it's important to take precautions to keep your pets safe both during and after Fourth of July festivities.

Preparing in advance:

- Make sure your pets – cats and dogs alike – have **identification tags** with up-to-date information. If you have horses, you might consider marking a safety (breakaway) halter with your contact information and leaving it on your horse during this stressful time.
- If your pets aren't already [microchipped](#), talk with your veterinarian about microchipping. This simple procedure can greatly improve your chances of getting your pets back if they become lost.
- If your pets are microchipped, [make sure your contact information in the microchip registry is up-to-date](#).
- Take a **current photo** of all of your cats, dogs and horses – just in case.
- If your pet has historically been anxious on this holiday, or if you have reason to expect potentially harmful reactions, consider **behavioral therapy** to desensitize your pet and reduce the risk of problems. Some pets may need medication. Consult your veterinarian or a [veterinary behaviorist](#).
- Make sure the environment is safe and secure. If your neighbors set off fireworks at an unexpected time, is your **yard** secure enough to keep your pet contained? Are **pasture fences** secure enough to keep horses or other livestock confined? Evaluate your options, and choose the safest area for your animals; and make improvements if needed to make the area more secure.

Safety during July 4 celebrations:

- **Leave your pets at home** when you go to parties, fireworks displays, parades and other gatherings. Loud fireworks, unfamiliar places and crowds can all be very frightening to pets, and there's great risk of pets becoming spooked and running away.
- Consider putting your pets in a **safe, escape-proof room or crate** during parties and fireworks.
- Keep horses and livestock in **safely fenced areas** and as far from the excitement and noise as possible.
- **If you're hosting guests**, ask them to help keep an eye on your pets to make sure they don't escape. Placing notes on exit doors and gates can help both you and your guests remain vigilant.
- Keep your **pets inside** if you or your neighbors are setting off fireworks.
- Keep **sparklers, glow sticks, fireworks, charcoal** and **kabob skewers** away from curious pets.
- Don't let pets get near your **barbecue grill** while it is in use or still hot.
- Avoid the urge to feed your pets **table scraps** or other foods intended for people. Be especially careful to keep them away from these [common foods that are actually toxic](#).
- Remember that too much **sun and heat** (and humidity!) can be dangerous to pets. Keep them inside when it's extremely hot/humid; make sure they have access to shady spots and plenty of water when outdoors; don't leave them outside for extended periods in hot weather; and know the [signs that a pet may be overheating](#).
- [Never leave your pet in your car](#) when it's warm outside. Vehicle interiors heat up much faster than the air around them, and even a short time in a locked car can be dangerous to pets.

- If you're **travelling out of town** for the holiday, consider leaving your pets at home with a pet sitter or boarding them in a kennel. If you need to bring them with you, be sure you know [how to keep them safe](#).
- Follow safe **food handling** and hygiene practices to protect your family and guests.

After the celebrations:

- **Check your yard** for fireworks debris before allowing pets outside to play or relax. Even if you didn't set off fireworks yourself, debris can make its way into your yard, where curious animals may pick it up to play with or eat.
- **Check your pastures** and remove debris to protect horses and livestock.
- If you hosted guests, check both your yard and home for **food scraps or other debris** that might be dangerous to pets, such as food skewers.

Related resources:

Microchip information: [August 15 is Check the Chip Day](#)



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