



While we may enjoy seeing the sky light up with a blast of fireworks or a spectacular lighting display courtesy of Mother Nature, firework displays and storms can be a terrifying experience for a lot of dogs and cats.

Animals fleeing fireworks and storms can become lost, sustain serious injuries and sadly in many cases run into serious trouble causing injury or costing them their lives. To keep your pet calm and stop them from running away during storms and fireworks, it is important that you are prepared.



## TIPS

- Identify your pet and keep your details up-to-date with the microchip records.
- Provide a safe and calming environment.
- Stay calm as your pet will take cues from you.
- Stay with your pet or arrange for someone you trust to stay with them.
- Make a note of weather warnings and firework schedules near your home.

## BEFORE FIREWORKS AND STORMS HIT

- Visit your vet to talk about what treatment options are available to help your pet stay calm.
- Create an indoor safe haven for your pet to use during fireworks and storms and train them to associate the space with positive experiences.
- Talk to your vet about training using storm soundtracks which may help reduce your pet's response to loud noises.
- Identify your pet with a microchip, collar and ID tag and make sure your contact details are up-to-date.
- While backyard fireworks are difficult to predict, find out about scheduled fireworks near you by visiting your council's website – or give them a call.
- Inspect your backyard for potential hazards and make sure fences and gates are secure.
- Keep an eye on weather forecasts and warnings.
- Take your dog for a long walk well before the event to help them relax.

## DURING FIREWORKS AND STORMS

- Avoid outside noises and use classical or relaxation music to drown out loud sounds.
- Close your blinds and encourage your dog to use their safe haven inside.
- Offer your dog special treats and toys to distract them from the event.
- Don't punish your dog during a storm or fireworks display; they're not being naughty, they're experiencing distress, fear or panic.
- Comfort and reassure your dog during the storm; this won't reward fear, but may help reduce their panic and distress.

### Useful resources and phone numbers:

- The Lost Dogs' Home North Melbourne Shelter on (03)9329-2755 or our Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic on (03) 8379 4498
- Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and updates – [bom.vic.gov.au](http://bom.vic.gov.au)
- Contact your council for the times of scheduled council fireworks in your neighbourhood.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

If your dog has escaped during a fireworks display or storm in the past or they have an existing phobia we recommend making an appointment with your vet or a vet from our Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic at The Lost Dogs' Home to discuss appropriate treatment options ahead of the next firework display near your home.

Some dogs with firework or storm phobia may need treatment with anti-anxiety medication to minimise their panic and to keep them safe. Other dogs may benefit from the use of Adaptil (a pheromone product), a Thundershirt, an anti-storm music soundtrack playing or gentle massage to help their anxiety.

Your vet or a behavioural vet will be able to help develop a plan for your dog for future firework displays and storms.

### BACKYARD FIREWORKS

Backyard fireworks are unpredictable and can be let off in close range of your home which makes them dangerous for your pet.

Owners with anxious pets need to plan carefully to make sure their pets are safe leading up to and during periods where backyard fireworks are common - New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and any other celebratory events.

If you hear or see any illegal backyard fireworks in your neighbourhood, contact the police on 000.

### LOST YOUR PET?

- Call local councils, animal shelters and vet clinics.
- Search your home, garden and neighbourhood.
- Stick up flyers, posters and do a letter-box drop.
- Post on neighbourhood online pet forums.
- Update your details on your pet's microchip.

### FOUND A PET?

- Check their collar for a council or identification tag with the owner's details or contact numbers.
- Call the council where you found the dog or cat.
- Post on neighbourhood online pet forums.
- If it is safe for you, take the animal to a shelter.

For more information on lost and found pets, visit [dogshome.com](http://dogshome.com). We have factsheets with tips on what to do to help achieve a positive outcome with lost and found pets.



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Since our official opening in 1913, we have been a voice for animals without owners caring for thousands of cats and dogs each year. Pioneers for fair animal laws, we continue to work on the front line to reduce the number of lost, abandoned and stray cats and dogs.

We rely on public support to run services and programs, including: proactive adoption, foster care, behaviour rehabilitation, low cost desexing and microchipping, and the promotion of better pet ownership through education.