



Fireworks and Other Loud-Noise-Producing Events

Association of Professional Dog Trainers Position Statement

The following statements reflect the opinion of the Association of Professional Dog Trainers.

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers recognizes that some dogs are extremely sound sensitive. These dogs may suffer a high level of fear and stress when exposed to loud noises such as fireworks, gunshots, thunder and vehicle backfires. In their panic, such dogs may jump through plate glass windows, scale fences that are otherwise normally adequate to safely contain them, and find other ways to break free from their usual confinement systems.

These panicked dogs, once free, are subject to all of the hazards faced by free-roaming dogs, and also present an increased risk to the safety of humans, given that fear can cause dogs to exhibit a higher degree of aggression than normal, and can also induce them to dart into traffic on major streets and highways, heedless of oncoming traffic. Such behaviors can result in egregious and sometimes fatal injury to dogs and humans alike.

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers recommends that dog owners stay informed and be aware of events in their communities that are likely to generate organized or random fireworks displays and take steps to protect their dogs from and or desensitize them to loud noises such as fireworks and thunder. Possible suggestions for protection include bringing the dog indoors, staying home during celebratory events, and/or consulting with a veterinarian regarding the use of appropriate medications. Effective desensitization often requires the assistance of a trainer/behavior consultant, and we encourage dog owners to check the APDT Trainer Search List to find an APDT member who is qualified to help them.

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers also urges their members to educate and remind their clients of the dangers of fireworks and thunderstorms and to provide suggestions and assistance for helping sound sensitive dogs cope.

APDT Board of Trustees

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