

FESTIVE SEASON ISSUES FOR ANIMALS

Caring animal owners will already be aware of the responsibilities that come with the approach of the festive season. Not least, avoiding the use of fireworks and ensuring that their companion animals are safe indoors in the event of any fireworks activity in the area.

This includes ensuring that vaccinations are up to date, boarding kennels or house-sitters booked well in advance and a back-up plan in case anything whatsoever goes wrong. Identification of the animal is paramount. Microchip ID is recommended as it is permanent and tamper-proof. Veterinarians and SPCAs have scanners that can detect the microchip and can give details of the owner/s.

Please spare a thought for animals that experience unusual noises, greater activity and many more visitors over the festive season. These can be confusing, even terrifying. Safety of children, visitors and animals is paramount. Tragic instances have occurred because children or visitors have been left alone with animals.

If it means keeping pets in a secure room during festivities, this may be a solution. Make sure that festive treats for humans are kept well out of the reach of animals. Chocolate, for example, contains an ingredient that is poisonous to dogs. Wrappers and wrappings can lodge in animals' throats and cause them to choke. This includes being vigilant with candles, balloons or any other decorations or party props. Keep it tidy and keep it safe!

Festivities are all well and good but it is often best to keep animals out of the fun. Please advise children that dressing pets up in funny hats or costumes can upset the animals, cause discomfort and may lead to fear-biting. We often hear "My children can do anything to the dog" and then we hear "I don't know what came over the dog. It has never bitten before" when we hear of a Christmas costume being put on the dog, a prank gone wrong or a pet that simply had too much.

Treat them with care and respect – ALL ANIMALS. It's their world too.

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