

MEDIA RELEASE from

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Cat owners remember, remember..... to follow the safe firework code

Cats Protection is urging members of the public to spare a thought for their feline friends during Bonfire Night celebrations.

“Before you grab your sparklers and join in the fun, please remember that this time of enjoyment for humans is a time of terror for animals. Cats are frightened of loud noises, and, if they are out and about during the revelry, they can also be at risk from ill treatment,” said Judy Bernstein, Head of Promotions at Cats Protection.

In order to keep your feline safe and happy this bonfire night, Cats Protection advises cat owners take the following precautions:

- Keep your cat in after dark and provide him or her with a litter tray if s/he is used to having garden access.
- Try to reduce outside noise by keeping windows shut and curtains drawn. Playing soothing music or having the TV on may also help.
- In order to make them feel secure, cats need to be settled in cosy, familiar territory such as a comfy bed or favourite chair.
- Cats that are known to be skittish, sensitive or new to a home, will be particularly vulnerable to firework noise and could panic and run away. Make sure doors and windows are securely fastened.

Other general precautions to ensure animal safety on bonfire night include:

- Buying hand-held cascading fireworks rather than the noise making varieties.
- Keeping fireworks and bonfires as far away from homes as possible, to minimise any adverse effects on animals indoors. This does not mean, however, that other wild animals will not be affected.
- Checking bonfires before lighting them to ensure that no small animals are sleeping inside.

Cats Protection Shelters and Branches still see too many incidences of needlessly traumatised and injured cats as a result of bonfire night and are keen to end this unnecessary suffering.

“Just like humans, cats can react in a number of different ways when frightened. Now that fireworks celebrations seem to go on longer than a single night, owners need to be very aware that, due to the stress of such events, their pet’s behaviour can change,” said Judy. Typical reactions that a stressed cat might display include grooming their hair excessively, house soiling or becoming less willing to interact with their owners.

During the lead up to bonfire night, Cats Protection’s national telephone Helpline will provide general advice concerning keeping felines safe and happy during this time. The Helpline is open from 9 am to 4.30pm, Monday – Friday and can be reached on ☎ 01403 221934.

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Notes to editors: For more information and to arrange an interview, please call Emma Osborne, Cats Protection Press Officer, ☎ 01403 221 934 or Rob Hall, Stourbridge Branch Public Relations Officer, ☎ 07884 432306.