



## Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter

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# July 4<sup>th</sup> Safety Tips for Pets

*Influx of strays already impacting Animal Shelter*

Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter wants to remind everyone about safety for animals surrounding the Independence Day holiday. More animals are lost during 4th of July celebrations than at any other time of the year.

Due to their highly sensitive hearing and eyesight, loud noises and flashing lights from fireworks can deeply frighten animals and can cause behavior that's unpredictable and out of character, like chewing through leashes, digging under or jumping over fences, bolting away from an owner, a car, or from home. They may even jump through screens or glass windows or run into traffic or other unsafe situations.

The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter is the only animal shelter in Santa Cruz County that accepts lost and stray animals. Both of our shelter locations (7<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Rodriguez St. in Santa Cruz and 580 Airport Blvd. in Watsonville) will be closed on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

"Our shelter is already quite full – we've been receiving far more animals than we've been sending home over the last several weeks," said Amber Rowland, the General Manager of Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter. "So it's very important that pet owners take every step they can to keep their animals safe and secure!"

The good news is that there are many things you can do to help keep your pets safe:

- **Make sure your pets are wearing identification tags and are microchipped so they can be returned promptly.** Two forms of ID are always best when it comes to protecting your pet: a visible ID tag and a microchip. If an individual finds your pet, the first thing they'll look for is an ID tag, but if a tag falls off, is damaged, or outdated, a microchip is a permanent, back-up form of ID. All pets brought to Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter are scanned for a

microchip, and you can have a microchip implanted by most veterinarians or at the Animal Shelter.

- **Don't take your pet to fireworks displays.** The explosions of the fireworks are loud to the human ear. Imagine how loud it sounds to your dog, who can hear sounds up to 60,000 cycles per second -- that's three times greater than the human ear can even register.
- **Do not leave your pet in the car.** With only hot air to breathe inside a car, your pet can suffer serious health effects, even death, in a few short minutes. Partially opened windows may not provide sufficient airflow and may provide an opportunity for your pet or other items to be stolen.
- **Keep your pets indoors in a sheltered, quiet area.** Some animals become destructive when frightened, so be sure you've removed any items your pet could destroy or may be harmful to your pet if chewed. It's important they have a safe, quiet "den-like" place to relax, such as a secure room of the house or blanketed crate. Leave a television or radio playing at normal volume to keep him/her company if you go out. Shut windows and blinds or curtains to limit exposure to flashing lights.
- **Exercise your pet.** Tire your dog or cat out with plenty of exercise early in the day.
- **If you know your pet is seriously distressed by loud noises like thunder,** consult with your veterinarian before July 4th to learn about options for alleviating fear and anxiety they'll experience during fireworks displays.
- **Never leave pets outside unattended, even in a fenced yard or on a chain or tether.** In their fear, pets who normally wouldn't leave the yard may escape and become lost, or become entangled in their chain or tether, risking injury or death.

Fireworks can be a source of stress for humans, too, especially for some Veterans, people who suffer from PTSD, and those with neurological differences. The loud, unexpected noises and flashing lights can be triggers for emotional and even physical distress. SCCAS wants to encourage everyone to be thoughtful and respectful of your human and animal neighbors as you celebrate.

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### **About Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS)**

*The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter is an open admission shelter which welcomes EVERY animal in need. Our goal is to be a humane resource for the community by providing a safety net and second chance for local animals. There are two locations where owners can find and recover lost pets, adopt new animal companions, or find out about resources available to help with pet care. For more information, visit our website, [www.scanimalshelter.org](http://www.scanimalshelter.org).*