



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cook County Department of Animal and Rabies Control Issues Pet Safety Tips Ahead of Hot Holiday Weekend

Increasingly warm weather and Fourth of July fireworks can both present potential hazards for pets. To ensure your pet remains safe and healthy, Cook County's Animal and Rabies Control recommends pet owners take the following precautions.

Fireworks

- The Fourth of July is especially stressful for animals. Fireworks can cause even the most well-trained dogs to panic. However, there are many ways to help keep your pet calm when fireworks are present.
 - Create a "safe" space in your home to ensure your pet feels comfortable. This could be a room they typically sleep in that includes some of their items like a pet bed or blanket.
 - Familiarize your pet with the sound of fireworks to desensitize them. Record the crackling, whizzing and booms fireworks create and play the sounds softly while giving your pet treats in their "safe" space. As your pet becomes more comfortable, you can gradually increase the volume.
 - Your veterinarian may also recommend an anti-anxiety medication to help keep your pet comfortable.
 - Fireworks can also spook pets, causing them to run away. Having a microchip implanted is the best way to increase your chances of being reunited with a pet that may have darted off. This quick and painless procedure can be done at your veterinarian's office.

Outdoor Activities

- Dogs often instinctively chase children who are running, on bicycles or on skateboards. Dog owners should ensure their pet is on a strong leash or properly

secured behind an impenetrable fencing system that their head does not extend over. The greatest number of children are bitten by dogs during the summer months.

- Be vigilant that your pet does not pick up food off the ground. People often discard food products that may be harmful to pets along their normal walking route. Keep dogs on short leads to prevent them from eating things like chicken bones or corn cobs, which could be deadly.

Warm Weather

- Pets should not be left in cars if the ambient temperature exceeds 78 degrees. The temperature in a car can go from 78 degrees to 115 degrees in 15 minutes even with windows open.
- It's important to know the warning signs of heat stroke which can occur when pets are active for even a short amount of time in weather above 80 degrees. If your pet is experiencing fatigue, excessive panting, disorientation, lethargy, discomfort, seizures or collapse, seek veterinary help immediately.
- Water evaporates in high heat so animal water bowls, whether inside or outside, must be refilled multiple times a day.
- Dogs must be provided with shelter against the sun if they are left outside. All animals tethered outside must be provided housing, water and food.

Rabies Vaccinations

- Dogs and household cats should be vaccinated against rabies. Do not allow cats to roam freely – their chances of having an interaction with wildlife are three times greater than dogs and wildlife is a major source of rabies.
- Bats remain the most prolific source of rabies in Illinois. If you see a bat inside of your home, contact local municipal authorities.

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