



THE BARRACKS  
VET SURGERY  
MOSMAN

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## FEAR & FIREWORKS

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### **Does your pet have a noise phobia?**

The acute hearing of our pets means the noises which frighten our children can overwhelm our pets. Thunderstorms, with associated electrical activity and unpredictable noises, and fireworks, are classic triggers of fear.

### **Can the Vet help?**

Yes. There are calming pheromones available as sprays, diffusers or collars that will assist in calming and reassuring your pet. In extreme cases pets will even require medications such as valium.

### **Is there any training that will help?**

Yes, behavioural training will slowly but steadily decrease fear and build confidence. You will need to expose your pet to noise in increasing increments, while you associate the training with rewards, squeaky toys, distractions and comforting. There are CDs available online to assist you (see "Canine Noise Phobia Series / Fireworks" on Amazon).

### **What practical steps can I take during the event?**

When you are aware a storm or New Year's Eve celebrations are approaching, you can make specific preparations.

- Ensure your pets are microchipped and tagged in case they do manage to escape.
- Give dogs a good long walk beforehand to relax them and provide them the opportunity to go to the toilet.
- Bring the pets inside well before the noise starts. Close windows and cat door etc.
- Provide a safe, enclosed space with a padded bed and litter tray for cats.
- Close the blinds and put on other music or the TV to provide some distraction. Keep the room bright to compensate for any flashes of light.
- Many pets appreciate the swaddling that "thundercoats" provide.
- Thunderstorms generate static electricity. To remove any buildup in the fur, wipe over your pet's coat with a dryer sheet (a sheet of tissue that goes in the dryer to collect lint).
- Offer comfort to your pet but behave confidently. If you seem overly concerned for your pet you will inadvertently reinforce their fear.