



Protecting cats and small pets during fireworks

*Practical guidance for cats, kittens, rabbits,
guinea pigs and other small pets*



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Caring for cats, kittens and small pets when the world gets loud

As a cat and small pet owner, I understand why fireworks season can bring worry. When you love an animal, hearing that first unexpected bang can immediately turn your thoughts to where they are, whether they feel safe and how you can help.

We know the noise is part of a celebration. Our pets cannot understand that, or know when it will stop. Watching a usually confident companion disappear into hiding—or wondering whether a very quiet rabbit or guinea pig is frightened—can leave us feeling helpless.

At **Cherished Companions**, I believe those small changes deserve our attention. Every pet has their own personality, favourite comforts and ways of showing that something feels wrong.

This guide brings together practical advice for Halloween, Bonfire Night, New Year and other noisy celebrations, with the gentle, thoughtful approach I would want for my own companions: preparing ahead, respecting their needs and knowing when extra help is needed.

Guide scope

This guide is for caring for cats, kittens and small pets during fireworks and other noisy celebrations. It covers preparation, in-the-moment support, recovery and signs that need veterinary attention.

Why fireworks can be so unsettling

Fireworks bring several unfamiliar things at once: sudden bangs, whistles, flashes and sometimes smoke. Cats and small pets have sensitive hearing, and small prey animals can be particularly alert to possible danger.

Fear does not always look dramatic. An animal may hide, freeze or stop eating rather than make a noise. A pet sitting very still may be frightened, even if they appear “well behaved”.

[PDSA small pet guidance](#)

For me, the aim is to help each pet feel secure enough to cope, with somewhere to retreat and as little additional disturbance as possible.

Your pet does not have to enjoy fireworks. Giving them safety, choice and patient care is what matters.

Plan for the whole season

It is easy to prepare for 5 November and then be caught out by fireworks the weekend before.

Time of year	What to plan for
Halloween — 31 October	Possible fireworks, repeated doorbells, visitors and doors opening. Have your arrangements ready before late October.
Bonfire Night — 5 November	Displays and private celebrations can take place on surrounding evenings and weekends.
New Year’s Eve — 31 December	Prepare before evening celebrations and keep pets secure through midnight and afterwards.
Other celebrations	Look out for local Diwali, Chinese New Year, weddings and community events involving fireworks.

Check local listings and ask neighbours whether they have plans. Knowing roughly when noise is expected helps, although unexpected fireworks are still possible. [Blue Cross seasonal advice](#)

A simple household calendar can help everyone remember which evenings need extra preparation.

Prepare several weeks beforehand

Start with familiar comforts

Think about their ordinary, peaceful days. Where does your cat choose to sleep? Which shelter do your rabbits use? Where does your guinea pig retreat when startled?

Use these preferences as your starting point. A familiar cardboard box or favourite sheltered corner may be more appealing than something new bought especially for the occasion.

Set up any additional hiding places early and allow your pet to explore them without pressure.

Speak to your vet early

If your cat has struggled during previous fireworks, arrange a conversation well ahead of the season. Blue Cross recommends seeking veterinary help six to twelve weeks beforehand for cats showing distress. If you have less time, it is still worth calling. [Blue Cross guidance](#)

Make a few notes beforehand: what your pet did, how long they took to recover and whether eating or toileting changed. This gives your vet a clearer picture.

Ask about a plan for your individual pet, including whether treatment or qualified behavioural support would help. Give prescribed medication only as directed.

For longer-term work with cats, carefully managed sound desensitisation may be appropriate. It is a gradual process best discussed with your vet or a qualified behaviourist; playing loud fireworks to “get them used to it” is not a suitable last-minute exercise. [Cats Protection behaviour guidance](#)

Make a practical care plan

Write down:

Your usual vet and out-of-hours number.

Where carriers and essential supplies are kept.

Who will be home on the busiest evenings.

Which doors, windows and cat flaps need checking.

Your pet's usual hiding places and normal eating habits.

Having these details ready can make a worrying evening feel more manageable.

Caring for adult cats

Bring them in before the noise begins

Have your cat indoors before dusk, or earlier if a display is scheduled. Introduce an evening meal indoors beforehand so coming home becomes part of a familiar routine.

Check windows, external doors and cat flaps, and make sure microchip contact details are current. Provide a litter tray, water and food while your cat is indoors. [Blue Cross cat advice](#)

On busy evenings, ask everyone to check where the cat is before opening an outside door.

Offer somewhere to hide

A box with familiar bedding, an accessible space beneath a bed or a secure elevated resting place may suit your cat. Let them choose.

Where practical, keep access to their usual safe rooms. Some cats become more distressed when confined to one unfamiliar room. Close curtains and use familiar television or music gently to soften the contrast between quiet and sudden bangs.

A cat pheromone diffuser may help some cats; introduce it a couple of weeks beforehand and follow the instructions. It cannot guarantee that your cat will remain calm. [Cats Protection fireworks guidance](#)

Let your cat set the pace

When a cat hides, it is natural to want to bring them out and reassure them. However, their hiding place may be the thing helping them cope.

Stay available without repeatedly checking inside their den. If they seek affection, offer it gently. If they prefer space, respect that. Never punish fear, hissing or toileting accidents. [Blue Cross advice on reassurance](#)

Sometimes caring means sitting nearby with a book and allowing a quiet

evening to unfold around them.

Caring for kittens

Keep their world small and familiar

Keep kittens indoors before dusk and throughout fireworks. Check windows, doors, cat flaps and other escape routes before the noise begins, remembering that a frightened kitten may squeeze through a surprisingly small gap.

Provide their usual food, water and litter tray, and keep feeding and settling routines as familiar as possible. A quiet room with familiar bedding gives a kitten somewhere secure to retreat.

Kittens can become cold quickly. Offer warmth through familiar bedding and a draught-free resting area, but avoid direct heat sources that could burn or overheat them.

Stay nearby without forcing contact. Let the kitten approach, and keep children and visitors from lifting or repeatedly checking them while they are hiding.

Seek veterinary advice for concerning changes such as not eating, vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing changes, marked lethargy or difficulty urinating. Your vet can advise on an individual kitten's age, health and needs.

Caring for rabbits

Outdoor pets need particular thought because their housing may be more exposed to bangs, flashes and smoke.

Arrange suitable shelter ahead of time

Where possible, prepare a secure indoor area before fireworks begin. For animals accustomed to outdoor temperatures, choose a cool room to avoid a sudden temperature change. A suitable car-free garage or shed may be an alternative.

If moving the enclosure is impossible, partial covering can reduce flashes and muffle some sound, but **good ventilation must remain**. A covered hutch is not soundproof. Nearby fireworks or bonfires are a strong reason to arrange indoor shelter. [PDSA housing advice](#)

Plan the move while things are quiet. Consider access, enclosure security and how you will check your pets without repeatedly disturbing them.

Bring familiar comforts with them

Provide their usual food, water, bedding and hiding places. Keep established bonded companions together; do not introduce unfamiliar animals for reassurance. Extra appropriate bedding gives small pets somewhere to nestle

and retreat. [RSPCA fireworks guidance](#)

Try to preserve the little details of their routine. Familiarity is especially valuable when the world outside sounds different.

Caring for guinea pigs

Protect their routine and monitor them closely

Keep bonded guinea pigs together and provide their usual food, water, bedding and hiding places. If they need to move indoors, prepare a cool, secure area ahead of time so the change is calm rather than rushed.

Extra appropriate bedding can give guinea pigs somewhere to nestle, while partial covering may reduce flashes if ventilation remains good. Check them quietly without repeatedly disturbing their shelter.

Pay particular attention to eating, drinking and droppings after a frightening evening. Seek prompt veterinary advice if a guinea pig stops eating, stops passing droppings or becomes unusually quiet.

Caring for hamsters, gerbils, rats and mice

Small indoor pets can be overlooked during fireworks because their distress may be less obvious.

The same quiet, low-disturbance approach applies across species, with a few practical differences:

Pet	Practical focus
Hamsters	Keep the familiar enclosure quiet and away from windows, add suitable nesting material and avoid waking or handling them during their usual sleeping period.
Gerbils	Keep established companions together, preserve deep bedding and familiar tunnels, and avoid unnecessary enclosure changes while fireworks are taking place.
Rats	Keep their familiar social group together, maintain comfortable warmth and ventilation, and quietly observe appetite, breathing and behaviour.

Mice	Offer secure nesting material and familiar hiding places, keep compatible companions together and check the enclosure for escape routes before the evening begins.
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Before the evening, position the enclosure away from windows, close curtains and provide extra suitable bedding. Any familiar background music should remain at a comfortable volume. [Blue Cross small pet advice](#)

Offer suitable hiding places and keep usual compatible companions together. This does not mean giving a normally solitary pet a companion. [PDSA small pet guidance](#)

Make your checks quiet and purposeful. Observe what you can without repeatedly lifting shelters or interrupting their retreat.

This guide focuses on cats, kittens and small mammals. Birds, reptiles and other species have different housing needs; ask an appropriate vet for advice tailored to them.

Make Halloween and New Year easier at home

Fireworks may be outside our control, but some household noise can be reduced.

My suggestions for a quieter evening are:

Reduce doorbell disturbance. A polite note asking visitors not to knock can help.

Brief guests beforehand. Explain which doors must stay closed and where pets are resting.

Keep resting areas private. Ask children and visitors to let pets remain undisturbed.

Choose quieter celebrations. Avoid balloon popping, party poppers and loud speakers near pets.

Agree who is checking the animals. One person taking responsibility avoids both missed checks and constant interruption.

For New Year, plan beyond the countdown. Keep arrangements in place while

fireworks continue locally, rather than assuming the noise ends just after midnight.

If fireworks start unexpectedly

Take a breath and work through the essentials:

Check where your pets are. Bring an outdoor cat inside if you can do so safely and calmly.

Secure escape routes. Check doors, windows and cat flaps.

Reduce flashes and noise. Close curtains and use gentle, familiar background sound.

Make hiding places accessible.

Stay calm and allow space. Avoid forcing interaction with a frightened pet.

These steps reflect practical advice from [Blue Cross](#) and the [RSPCA](#).

An unexpected bang can catch anyone out. Focus on what you can do now rather than blaming yourself for not predicting it.



Notice the quieter signs of distress

You know your companion's everyday behaviour. A change from that baseline matters.

Cats may	Small mammals may
Hide or withdraw more than usual	Freeze or remain unusually still
Pace or seem restless	Rush around or try to escape
Eat or drink less	Eat less or produce different

	amounts of droppings
Groom excessively or change toileting habits	Tremble, breathe faster or grind their teeth

These changes can indicate fear, but they may also indicate illness or pain. New or persistent changes deserve veterinary advice. [Cats Protection](#), [PDSA](#)

When to contact your vet

Do not dismiss changes in appetite or toileting as “just the fireworks”.

Urgent veterinary advice

Seek urgent veterinary advice for a rabbit or guinea pig that stops eating or passing droppings; a cat straining or unable to urinate; or any pet with breathing difficulty, collapse, injury or severe, prolonged distress. If you are unsure, call your vet or out-of-hours service.

Rabbits: contact your vet immediately if eating decreases or stops, or droppings reduce or stop. Gut problems can become serious quickly; do not wait until morning. [PDSA rabbit guidance](#)

Guinea pigs: seek prompt veterinary advice if they stop eating, stop passing droppings or become unusually quiet. Do not wait overnight to see whether they improve. [Veteris veterinary advice](#)

Cats: contact your vet promptly for straining, blood in the urine or repeated attempts to urinate. **Trying to urinate without producing urine requires urgent attention.** [Blue Cross cat guidance](#)

If your pet remains frightened despite your preparations, ask for further help. Small-pet calming products do not have established evidence of effectiveness, so discuss products with your vet rather than assuming something labelled “calming” will suit your animal. [PDSA guidance](#)

The morning after matters too

Allow your pets time to settle and return to their familiar routine. Quietly check eating, drinking, toileting and behaviour, and seek advice for concerning changes. [RSPCA aftercare guidance](#)

Before outdoor access resumes, check for firework debris. Spent fireworks can cause burns and contain harmful substances. [Cats Protection safety advice](#)

Write down what helped: the room your cat chose, whether background sound seemed useful, or any change in your small pet's appetite. These observations can improve next time's plan and help your vet.

If someone else is caring for your pets

Share a written fireworks plan with your sitter or family member. Include:

When your cat must be indoors.

Where each animal usually hides.

What normal eating and toileting look like.

Any veterinary instructions or prescribed medication.

Your contact details and emergency vet arrangements.

What to do if a pet cannot be found or appears unwell.

Agree the timing and extent of care beforehand, especially if your pet needs company during the evening. A short visit and a person staying through a display provide different levels of support.

Your Cherished Companions evening checklist

- ☐ Cats indoors before fireworks begin
- ☐ Doors, windows and cat flaps checked
- ☐ Small pets in suitable secure shelter
- ☐ Familiar bedding and hiding places ready
- ☐ Usual food, water and litter facilities available

- ☐ Curtains closed and background sound gentle
- ☐ Established companions together where appropriate
- ☐ Guests and carers understand the plan
- ☐ Vet details and carriers accessible
- ☐ Eating, toileting and recovery checked afterwards

A caring word from Cherished Companions

If fireworks season makes you anxious for your pets, you are not alone. It is hard to see an animal you love feel frightened, particularly when you cannot explain what is happening.

You do not need to create a perfect evening. Thoughtful preparation, a familiar place to hide and a patient response all matter. So does recognising when your companion needs veterinary support.

My hope is that this guide helps you feel more prepared—and helps your cats and small pets feel cared for when the world outside gets loud.

With care,

Cherished Companions

General welfare guidance informed by the organisations linked throughout. Your vet can advise on your pet's individual health and needs.