

# Before you light that firecracker

Every year, like clockwork, the SPCA movement campaigns against the use of fireworks, yet every year, countless animals (and humans) are left injured and traumatised by these so-called “festive pleasures”. The fireworks season is just around the corner, with the Hindu Festival of Lights, Diwali, on 23 October, Guy Fawkes on 5 November and New Years’ Eve ending the year on 31 December. So before you light that firecracker, please remember the dangers that fireworks pose to animals and humans alike – and respect the parameters set in place by our City’s law enforcement.

It’s not difficult to imagine the pain. If a dog can hear a grasshopper eating – how much louder is it then for a dog to hear the incredible crack and bang of fireworks, blasting off in the neighbourhood, or worse his/her own home – one after another. The trauma is enough to send any pet running for safety. And this is exactly the behaviour that ends tragically for thousands of animals each year.

*“The SPCA is opposed to the use of any fireworks which emit a loud noise, due to the trauma and injuries they cause animals. Because animals are able to hear a wider range of sounds than humans can, the sound from fireworks is at least **seven times louder** to them and therefore their natural response would be to try and escape the sound with sometimes tragic consequences”,* said CoGH SPCA Inspectorate Manager Moyo Ndukwana.

The Animals Protection Act clearly states that “it is illegal for any person to terrify any animal” yet thousands of animals end up at the CoGH SPCA every year, lost and abandoned, disorientated and sometimes severely injured.

The Firearms and Explosives Ordinance also makes it illegal for any child under the age of 16 to use or buy fireworks and it is illegal to use or sell fireworks without an official permit except at an officially designated site. In spite of this legislation, fireworks are still sold in many corner cafés to anyone of any age and they continue to be set off at residential homes and gardens where they cause a real danger.

The following designated areas have been assigned by the City of Cape Town for the safe discharge or fireworks – these are the ONLY areas in Cape Town where fireworks are allowed to be set off:

- Bishop Lavis sports field, Lavis Drive, Bishop Lavis
- Wesfleur sports field, Reygersdal Drive, Atlantis
- Macassar Beach parking area, Macassar Road, Macassar
- Swartklip Sports Complex, corner of Spine and Swartklip Roads, Mitchells Plain
- Maidens Cove parking area, Victoria Road, Camps Bay
- Athlone Stadium parking area (Eastern side), Klipfontein Road, Athlone
- Strandfontein Pavilion, Strandfontein
- Beachfront opposite the Tourism Centre, Table View

Harming an animal with fireworks will result in prosecution. We urge anyone who even suspects any acts of cruelty in their neighbourhood, to report the details to the CoGH SPCA Inspectorate immediately on 021 700 4158/59 or after hours and on weekends on 083 326 1604.

If you have any information relating to the illegal sale or use of fireworks please report the information to the Metro Police call centre on 0860-POLICE (765 423) or to the SAPS on 10111.

## **How to protect your pet from fireworks**

The SPCA advises residents living in areas where fireworks will be discharged to adopt the following guidelines to help protect their pets:

- Ensure all animals have identification; preferably a micro-chip or at least with a dog tag because without identification, the task of reuniting lost pets with their owners will be that much more difficult;
- If possible, stay at home with them;
- If you can't be at home, keep your pets inside and preferably in a room that is safe and secure;
- Try and mask any noise by drawing the curtains and playing calming music;
- Put familiar and comforting things around them;
- Give your pets a nutritious and balanced meal – this is likely to make them more sleepy;
- Give them something to chew on – a chewy bone or catnip toys for cats;
- If you suspect your pet will react badly to fireworks, please seek professional advice from your veterinarian who may prescribe a sedative to help them cope. There are also effective homeopathic remedies available that may be bought across the counter at vet shops to help keep your pet calm.

/Ends

Issued by the Cape of Good Hope SPCA. For editorial queries contact Wanika Davids on 021 700 4178 or email [comms@spca-ct.co.za](mailto:comms@spca-ct.co.za).