



MOHAWK HUDSON  
**HUMANE  
SOCIETY**

3 Oakland Avenue, Menands, NY 12204 [mohawkhumane.org](http://mohawkhumane.org)

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### **Fireworks and Pets – Mohawk Hudson Humane Society Offers Ways to Reduce Stress and Keep Pets Safe and Calm**

**Menands** – Independence Day is more than a week away, yet fireworks and their loud bangs have already been occurring across our communities nightly. The noise can be extremely stressful to pets. A pet's fear will show itself in different ways. Pets may vocalize, shake or shiver. They may try to escape or hide. Others may be very clingy and not want to leave their person's side. Pupils will be dilated.

Nancy Haynes, Director of Behavior and Enrichment at Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, offers these tips to help ease fear and anxiety.

- Establish a safe haven that is always available for pets. This is a place where pets like to relax and choose to go to on their own – not just when they are afraid. For dogs, it might be an open crate with their favorite toys or, for cats, a place under the bed or in a closet with their favorite bedding. Pets may also find comfort here during other stressful events, such as during thunderstorms, doorbell rings, visitors from strangers, etc.
- Mask the noise of fireworks with air conditioning, white noise, classical music, talk radio or television.
- Give dogs an enjoyable distraction to occupy their mind. If they are not too stressed to eat, feeding toys are a great choice. One example is a Kong toy with peanut butter inside that they can chew and lick. Freeze the Kong to make it last longer. A snuffle mat loaded with dry kibble encourages their natural foraging instinct. These can be made at home. Simply look for instructions online. More trainers are now encouraging use of snuffle mats for routine feeding, as it can also slow down dogs that eat too quickly.
- A Thundershirt is a vest for cats and dogs that fits snugly and feels like a hug. This calming tool can also be helpful for trips to the vet, nail trims and other stressful situations.
- Aromatherapy can also help. First let the pet sniff the oil to see if it is appealing to them. If so, place a little on the pet's bedding, or rub on hands and gently massage the pet. Be sure to use a pure oil that is safe for pets.
- Treats with CBD oil can be calming. Always ensure they are from a reputable source.
- If fireworks can be anticipated, try to get some extra exercise in during the day, so that the pet will be tired and more likely to sleep when the activity starts. Mental workouts, such as indoor

play with toys and puzzles, are just as effective as walking or playing outside.

- Keep pets indoors during fireworks and make sure they are always wearing identification, as fearful pets may try to pull away and run. More pets go missing over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday than any other time of year.

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Founded in 1887, the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society (MHHS) is the oldest and largest animal protection organization in New York's Capital Region, serving Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and surrounding counties. The Society provides sheltering for stray and owner-relinquished animals, low-cost spay/neuter and wellness services at both their Menands Animal Care Center and Saratoga Clinic, a pet food pantry, cruelty investigation support for law enforcement, dogs training and more. In 2019, the Society found homes for 3,060 animals