

Halloween Safety Tips:

How to Prevent Scare-dy Cats (and Dogs)



For kids of all ages, Halloween can be a howlin' good time. But for pets, this fun-filled day can present problems. The Regional Animal Shelter would like to offer some tips to make sure your best friends are not at risk during the course of festivities. The basic rule is to keep dogs and cats in a separate, closed-off room during peak trick-or-treat visiting hours, when many strangers in unusual garb might be confusing and stressful. A radio or television on low volume can help drown out the noise and help your pet feel more secure.

Here are some other helpful guidelines:

- When opening the door for trick-or-treaters, take care that your pet does not run out. In all cases, your pets should be wearing current identification, such as a tagged collar, or a microchip, just in case.
- Keep all Halloween candy out of your pet's reach. Chocolate can be toxic to animals, and tinfoil, cellophane and plastic candy wrappers can be hazardous if swallowed.
- Place lighted pumpkins away from where animals can reach them. Pets can knock them over, and curious kittens especially run the risk of being burned.
- Never leave your pet in the yard on Halloween where they can be the targets of pranksters who might tease, injure, steal and even kill pets on this night.
- It is especially important to keep ALL cats inside for several days before and after Halloween. Black cats in particular may be at risk from pranks or other cruelty-related incidents.
- Don't dress up your dog or cat unless you know he or she enjoys it. If you decide to do so, make sure the costume isn't annoying or unsafe, and doesn't restrict movement, vision, hearing or the ability to breathe or bark. Avoid costumes with small or dangling accessories that the pet could chew off and possibly choke on. Make sure an adult supervises pets in costume at all times.
- It's never a good idea to take your pet trick or treating. Dogs may become excited and uncontrollable and if frightened, may bite.