



Dear MSP,

We're contacting you from Animal Concern, an independent animal welfare charity working across the UK based in Scotland. As you know Bonfire Night is fast approaching. There will be public and private fireworks displays across the country. These displays are often profoundly distressing for animals whether pets, livestock or in the wild.

It is the position of Animal Concern that there should be a blanket ban on fireworks in the UK however we realise this will not happen any time soon. We are therefore promoting sound animal husbandry in the lead up to 5 November for people who keep animals either as pets or in an agricultural setting.

We are asking MSPs to use those means of communications at your disposal to help mitigate harm to animals over this peak fireworks season whether it be columns in your local press, email distribution lists or social media. For example:

- First and foremost, there is no substitute for consulting a veterinarian. They will be able to advise across the widest range of queries to keep your animal safe and calm.
- Keep pets indoors, the noise and lights can be terrifying for them.
- If your pet is shaking wrap it in a towel and encourage, but don't force it, to where it feels safe in the house, this will often be where it generally sleeps.
- Stay calm yourself, even though this can be difficult, pets often take emotional cues from their owners.
- Make sure you take your dog for its evening walk early before fireworks displays begin
- Cover cages and hutches to help soundproof them, if you have a small animal live outside in a garden, it's a good idea to bring them inside for the night.
- Keep horses in stables to stop them from running away.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but a few, we hope, helpful hints; there is good advice available from a wide range of stakeholders including the PDSA, the Fire Brigade and the British Veterinary Association.

In addition to keeping animals safe there is also a new legislative framework in Scotland in 2022 which includes a prohibition on the sale of fireworks to anyone under 18 and making it an aggravated offense to attack emergency workers using fireworks. Animal Concern has reservations as to the efficacy of this framework, in terms of both its scope and enforcement mechanisms.

Animal Concern Ltd is a Registered Scottish Charity (No. SC050422) and a registered non-profit making Limited Company (No. SC109126). Established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Limited we changed our name to Animal Concern in 1992.

Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society, founded in 1876.

Our registered office is c/o Clements Chartered Accountants, 17 Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh G84 8AD

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This is something we hope to discuss with elected members in the coming months. However, again in practical terms between now and 5 November, we hope MSPs will use what tools you have at your disposal to encourage the public to report to the police any infractions they see of the new criminal code and certainly not to take any matter into their own hands. For example, instead of confronting the organisers of an illegal display, please simply notify the police.

We hope you will be able to help get good information into the public domain.

Animal Concern is keen to engage with elected members and would welcome any response.

Yours sincerely

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