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*****Media Alert*****

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Contact: Alexa Pratt
Public Information Officer
OC Community Resources
(714) 514-2395
Alexa.Pratt@occr.ocgov.com

July 4th Weekend is the Busiest Time of Year for Local Shelters OC Animal Care is Urging Pet Families to Prepare Now and Keep Pets Safe

TUSTIN, Calif. (July 2, 2024) – It's widely reported that more pets go missing during July 4th celebrations than any other holiday throughout the year. As we prepare in Orange County to celebrate with fireworks, barbecues and festivities, OC Animal Care is urging pet parents to make a plan and take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of their furry family members.

What you should do now before celebrations begin:

- **Update collars and tags:** Ensure your pets have a properly fitted collar and that ID tags have current, legible contact information.
- **Microchip:** If your pet doesn't have a microchip, consider visiting your veterinarian or a low-cost pet clinic to get one. If your pet does have a microchip, be sure to check the chip registration to confirm your contact information is up-to-date and accurate.
- **Consider creature comforts:** A thunder shirt, pet specific calming sprays, or even a busy, food related toy like a lick mat, Kong, or snuffle mat may help reduce anxiety or give your pet something to focus on. Plan ahead for what may help your pet feel less stressed.
- **Visit the vet:** If your pet has a high level of anxiety, talk to your veterinarian about safe and effective medication options or over-the-counter remedies that may help reduce anxiety and follow your veterinarian's guidance on administering them.

It's important to remember that these celebrations can be a source of anxiety and danger for our pets. Especially when fireworks light up the sky, many dogs experience heightened anxiety and stress due to loud noises and commotion. To help alleviate this, OC Animal Care is offering essential tips to ensure that pets remain safe and calm.

What you should do during festivities:

- **Keep pets indoors:** Fireworks can be frightening and disorienting for pets. Keep them inside in a quiet, secure area to minimize stress.
- **Create a safe space:** Set up a comfortable space with their favorite toys, blankets, and a cozy bed. Consider playing calming music or using white noise like a television to drown out the fireworks.
- **Avoid human food:** Keep pets away from barbecue and picnic foods, which can be harmful to them. Ensure they have access to their regular pet food and water.



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- Secure doors and windows: Close all doors, windows, and pet flaps to prevent pets from running away if they get scared.
- Exercise pets during the day: Take your pets for a walk or engage them in playtime earlier in the day to tire them out before the fireworks begin. Be sure to keep them on a leash and limit free-roaming back-yard time as firework noise may interrupt their routine at all hours.

OC Animal Care, like most animal shelters in Southern California as well as throughout the US, are already at critical capacity. Every 4th of July, animal shelters across the country experience an increase in incoming dogs as they flee their homes from the loud fireworks. The shelter is in desperate need of fosters throughout the next few weeks to free up available space for new, incoming animals lost around the holiday.

The shelter is asking for a 2–3-week commitment to give a dog the opportunity to spend time out of a kennel and in the comfort of a loving home while freeing up critical space for newly stray dogs to hopefully be reunited with their family. By fostering a dog that was in the shelter pre-holiday, you can provide a shelter dog with a calm and secure environment, while creating space for more animals in need. OC Animal Care will also provide each foster family with a starter kit containing food and basic supplies including a leash, collar, and tags for your temporary housemate.

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About OC Animal Care

OC Animal Care is the largest municipal animal shelter in Orange County, located at 1630 Victory Rd. Tustin, CA 92782. It services 14 cities and takes in over 14,500 animals each year. OC Animal Care provides refuge and care for animals, fosters the human-animal bond, and promotes safety in our community. For more information about OC Animal Care, please visit ocpetinfo.com.

Contract cities include Anaheim, Brea, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, Lake Forest, Orange, Placentia, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Ana, Tustin, Villa Park, Yorba Linda, and the County unincorporated areas.