

Fire Safety for Pets

Each year in the United States, thousands of people lose their lives to fire. Tens of thousands are injured and the financial costs can reach into the billions of dollars. Almost forgotten in these tragedies are the hundreds of thousands of family pets who suffer death or injury as well.

By: Dr. Jim Humphries, Veterinary News Network

Fire is a very scary thing! We use controlled fires to heat our water, cook our meals and power our cities, but for most people, fire is a wild, ravaging beast. And, despite educational programs that start in pre-school, every year more than three thousand people die in house fires. Sadly, those who survive a house fire often lose cherished four-legged family members to the smoke and flames.

According to the US Fire Administration's website (www.usfa.dhs.gov), more than 1.7 million uncontrolled fires occur annually in the US. The Fire Administration does not keep tally, but other groups have estimated that more than 500,000 pets are killed by house fires each year. Why are we so good at saving human lives, but our pets seem to perish?

One potential answer is the presence of smoke alarms in our homes. For more than 30 years, laws have required the presence of these life-saving devices in any home or apartment. In fact, the Public/Private Fire Safety Council has called for an elimination of residential fire deaths by the year 2020 and smoke alarms figure prominently in their plan. But the high pitched alarm that saves so many human lives is not helpful for saving our pets.

We all realize that it's time to evacuate when the alarm sounds, but our pets don't know that. Worse yet, the unknown sound could scare a pet into hiding, increasing our own risk for harm as we search for the missing kitty or pup.

And, the sad fact is that many pets will die in house fires because they are unable to get out of the home. This often happens when the family is away. Rescue personnel are frequently unaware of pets needing help.

The heroic efforts of firefighters may save some pets from the flames, but damage from smoke or carbon monoxide inhalation can overwhelm many. Life-saving equipment, such as oxygen masks, is usually designed for people meaning some animals may die enroute to the veterinarian.

Fortunately, many diverse groups are working to improve the survival chances of pets caught in fires. Many concerned groups, from alarm monitoring companies, like ADT Security, to local veterinarians and humane organizations are looking to save the half a million pets lost each year.

As with many tragedies, preventing the occurrence is the best first step. Pet owners are urged to "pet proof" their home and look for potential fire hazards. Always extinguish open flames before leaving your home and consider keeping younger puppies and kittens confined to prevent them from accidentally starting a fire.

Firefighters are trained to look for window alert signs and make attempts to save pets. These “window clings” are often available from the American Kennel Club or visit ADT’s website (<https://www.adt.com/resi/programs/pets?cid=115>) to obtain a free one. Beyond using the signs, you should always update them as new pets arrive in your family!



If you return home to a burning building, you should not attempt to enter, trying save your pets! This is difficult but you need to let the professionals do their job and rescue your animals.

As mentioned, working smoke alarms are helpful to the humans, but if you aren’t there to hear the alarm, your pets could be trapped inside. According to Bob Tucker, PR Director of ADT Security, pet owners should consider monitored smoke detection services as an extra precaution. By alerting the fire department more quickly, these services increase the chances that your pets will get out safely.

Finally, due to the efforts of local veterinarians and animal volunteers, many rescue services across the nation now have access to “animal-appropriate” oxygen masks. These devices help deliver life-saving oxygen more effectively and will increase the chance of your pet’s survival. Other veterinarians teach courses on effective animal CPR techniques to first responders.

Saving pets from the horrors of fire will be easier thanks to dedicated fire fighting professionals, alarm companies, veterinarians and humane organizations all working together.

http://www.myvnn.com/page.asp?id=39&media_type=8&story_id=81

Editor’s Note: Interested in donating oxygen masks to your local fire department? Find products at <http://www.surgivet.com/products/rescue-resuscitation/>

Owners Spending On Pet Care Despite Recession

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With more than 65% of American families having a pet, pet care—including food, accessories, veterinary services and grooming—is big business, according to a news report.

American Pet Products Association data shows spending on pet care was \$43.2 billion in 2008 and is expected to cross \$45 billion this year.

According to IBISWorld, an industry and market research firm, pet stores are expected to touch \$11.45 billion in revenue this year. A growth of 5% over the next five years is expected in pet care, training and pet sitting.

Veterinary services accounted for \$22.3 billion in 2008 and is expected to grow 4.3% over the next five years.

<http://www.petfoodindustry.com/>

Some Herding Dogs Sensitive to Horse Dewormers

Genetic Test Available

by: Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine
August 28 2009, Article # 14804

Most horses' immediate reaction to being dewormed is to spit as much of the offending paste out as soon as possible after dosing. As well as being aggravating for owners, this habit can be dangerous if there's a herding breed dog (collie, Australian Shepherd, Shetland Sheepdog, or related dog) in the family--for some dogs, licking a blob of paste could be fatal.

For years, veterinarians and dog owners have known that some collies and related breeds can die when given a certain class of antiparasitic drug. The class of antiparasitic drugs, the avermectins, includes ivermectin, moxidectin, milbemycin, selamectin, and others. The avermectins are commonly used against parasites in animals and humans.

In 2001, researchers at Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, discovered the reason herding breed dogs are extremely sensitive to the toxic effects of avermectins. These dogs have a defect in a gene that encodes a protein pump called P-glycoprotein. P-glycoprotein is thought to have developed to protect the body from environmental toxins.

To date, over 10,000 dogs have been tested for this defect, called the MDR1 mutation. A gene known as the multi-drug resistance gene, MDR1, normally codes for the production of P-glycoprotein. Katrina Mealey, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVIM, the primary investigator, found that in susceptible dogs MDR1 contains a "deletion mutation"--parts of the genetic code are missing. As a result, synthesis of P-glycoprotein is unsuccessful.

At improper doses, avermectins are powerful neurotoxins. In normal dogs, P-glycoprotein pumps this toxin from the brain. In dogs with a deletion mutation in the MDR1 gene, P-glycoprotein is no longer available to protect the brain. Ingestion of the wrong dose of any of these avermectin compounds can cause neurological toxicity in a dog with the MDR1 mutation. Signs of avermectin toxicity include unsteadiness, dilated pupils, excessive salivation, and can include coma and death.

Another potential route of exposure for dogs is by ingesting feces of horses or other livestock that have recently been treated with one of the avermectins. Because these drugs are designed to act in the intestinal tract, they achieve high concentrations there, and subsequently relatively high concentrations in feces.

Mealey found that about 75% of collies have the genetic anomaly that stops production of P-glycoprotein. Other breeds that might be affected include Australian Shepherds, Border Collies, English and German Shepherds, and more.

Breeds affected by the MDR1 mutation (frequency %)

Breed	Approximate Frequency
Australian Shepherd	50%
Australian Shepherd, Mini	50%
Border Collie	< 5%
Collie	70 %
English Shepherd	15 %
German Shepherd	10 %
Herding Breed Cross	10 %
Long-haired Whippet	65 %
McNab	30 %
Mixed Breed	5 %
Old English Sheepdog	5 %
Shetland Sheepdog	15 %
Silken Windhound	30 %

Approximately three of every four Collies in the United States have the mutant MDR1 gene. The frequency is about the same in France and Australia, so it is likely that most Collies worldwide have the mutation. The MDR1 mutation has also been found in Shetland Sheepdogs (Shelties). Australian Shepherds, Old English Sheepdogs, English Shepherds, German Shepherds, Long-haired Whippets, Silken Windhounds, and a variety of mixed breed dogs. The only way to know if an individual dog has the mutant MDR1 gene is to have the dog tested. As more dogs are tested, more breeds will probably be added to the list of affected breeds.

The MDR1 test is available to the public. Testing kits, instructions, and information about what breeds of dogs are affected and what drugs to worry about are available on the [Washington State University Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology Laboratory Web site](http://www.washingtonstate.edu/veterinary/clinical-pharmacology-laboratory/).

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=14804>

Catawba County Changes Ordinance on Dangerous Dogs

Catawba County Commissioners recently changed its animal control ordinance to address more specific areas regarding potentially dangerous and dangerous dogs. According to the revisions, the owner of a potentially dangerous or dangerous dog must have liability insurance of at least \$500,000. The \$500,000 required liability insurance policy is designed to protect the community if the dog attacks again.

A potentially dangerous dog is one that has killed or inflicted a severe injury on a domestic animal when not on its owner's property, approached a person in a vicious or terrorizing manner in an attitude of attack when not on its owner's property or a dog that has inflicted an unprovoked bite to a human.

A dangerous dog is any dog that has killed or inflicted severe injury to a person, is owned or used primarily for dog fighting or has been declared a potentially dangerous dog and, while out of its secured enclosure, bitten a person or another domestic animal.

The ordinance already stipulated that if the owners decided to keep their dog, they have 21 days to build a chain link enclosure, with poles that are sunk into concrete-filled holes that go 18 inches into the ground. There must also be a two-inch concrete pad and a roof, so the dog can't climb over the fence. The enclosure must also have signs clearly warning the public there is a potentially dangerous dog inside. The revised ordinance also states if it's a dog's second violation, the dog is immediately impounded and becomes the property of Catawba County. According to Animal Services most of the owners who have dogs that are identified as dangerous or potentially dangerous have their dogs euthanized. *Source: Hickory Record*

Ag Groups Urge Letters to TIME Editors

The Time magazine cover story bashing modern agriculture production has raised the ire of numerous Ag groups - and they're letting their voices be heard while encouraging individual farmers to share their opinions about the story with Time's editorial board. Dairy Herd Management Online includes a direct link to Time's Letter to the Editor form as well as a link to American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman's letter to Time's editor and links to other ag industry comments on the story. Stallman's letter begins with a quote from a Time cover story published in 1978 that's complimentary to the modern farmer. Stallman says Time's "contemporary reporters would do well to take a comprehensive lesson in objectivity and good journalism from their predecessors." Stallman says Bryan Walsh, the author of the current Time cover story - 'Getting Real About the High Price of Cheap Food' launches a "vicious attack on modern farmers and the processes they use to care for the land, their animals, their neighbors and communities." Stallman calls it a "full-blown opinion piece disguised as news."

He expresses to Time's editors that as for farmers - quote - "we will stand tall knowing that Americans today have once again fallen in love with American food, and due in part to the healthy food we produce, they are living longer than ever before."

Whether Stallman's and similar letters will be published in the next issue of Time is up to the publication's editors. *Brownfield – Agriculture Today* <http://brownfieldagnews.com>

HSUS and Farmers May Battle Over Ballot Initiative in Michigan

Michigan House bills 5127 and 5128, which were introduced to the House last month would codify current farm animal industry standards and mandate a 10-member advisory council that would create standards and require the Michigan Department of Agriculture to audit farms to make sure they're in compliance. The 10-member council would make recommendations to the state Department of Agriculture and the Commission on Agriculture on changes to the standards every five years. The department and commission would have sole authority to regulate livestock health and welfare.

State Rep. Mike Simpson, D-Jackson, one of the sponsors of the Michigan bills, said the California ballot initiative highlighted the lack of mandatory standards here, which makes the state vulnerable to outside groups. "With this legislation, we can prove farmers are doing it right," he said. "We can find the bad actors and weed them out. We don't need outside folks coming into the state."

In a battle forming over proposed state standards for farm animal treatment, farmers and agribusiness leaders are supporting the House bills -- and squaring off against animal activists who oppose them.

A bruising 2010 ballot initiative campaign could be on the horizon, led by the Humane Society of the United States. HSUS says the proposed bills, which could be voted on in the House Agricultural Committee this week, don't address their concerns about tight confinement methods, such as battery cages for poultry. HSUS wants the industry to move to a cage-free system that allows at least 1.5 square feet of barn space.

According to Jill Fritz, Michigan state director for the Humane Society of the United States, HSUS also opposes the House bills because agribusiness interests would dominate the advisory council.

The Humane Society of the United States, which is not affiliated with state or local agencies, is considering ballot initiatives in Michigan and Ohio. Last month, Ohio lawmakers approved resolutions to create a 13-member board to oversee animal treatment, and residents there will vote on a constitution amendment. The action, prompted by California's vote, is seen as a preemptive strike.

Dog Owner Education Is the Key to the Dog Adoption Problem

Choose the right dog breed and get involved in your dog's care

Indiana. Of the nearly two million dogs brought to animal shelters by their owners each year, up to two-thirds might still be living at home if their owners took the pets to obedience classes or visited the veterinarian more often, according a Purdue University study.

An additional one-third of the dogs might still be pets if their owners had sterilized them or had realistic expectations about the pet's behavior.

"Dogs that had not been in obedience classes were about 3.5 times more likely to be relinquished to a shelter," says Dr. Gary J. Patronek, a post-doctoral fellow in Purdue's School of Veterinary Medicine and one of the study's authors. "Dogs that hadn't been to the veterinarian at all were about 13 times more likely to be given up than dogs that had been at least twice. Veterinary care and obedience classes may increase the owner's bonding to the dog."

The researchers calculated the potential reduction in number of dogs relinquished to shelters using a statistical method called population attributable risk. The method is used in human studies to determine how much a given disease could be reduced if certain risk factors were eliminated.

The study compared 285 owners who had given up their dogs with 748 who still had dogs. The results were published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The study did not look at strays brought to shelters, but only those dogs given up voluntarily by their owners. About half of the 4 million total dogs that end up in shelters each year are euthanized.

"Surprisingly, nearly half of the households that gave up a dog said they had planned the acquisition carefully," says Patronek, a veterinarian and former humane society director. But only about one-fourth of the households that sought veterinary care said the doctor routinely offered advice on behavior or training.

"Visiting a veterinarian is a chance for the owner to learn what's normal and abnormal behavior and thus be more tolerant of the pet," Patronek says. "It's pretty clear from the study that increased education and outreach efforts by veterinarians, dog clubs and other animal-welfare groups could substantially reduce the number of dogs handled annually by shelters, of which about half are put to sleep."

However, because many dogs, especially puppies, are acquired free from friends and neighbors or through newspaper ads, it's more difficult to educate these owners about the responsibilities of caring for a pet, Patronek says.

"An even greater challenge is to reach new dog owners who don't initially seek veterinary care or dog-training services," he says. "Community intervention programs are needed to identify these owners and get them into the loop on formal training and veterinary care."

The research found that dogs obtained beyond puppyhood -- more than six months of age -- had the greatest chance of being given up for adoption. Also, a dog that was kept mainly in the back yard was about six times more likely to be given up for adoption than one kept in the house.

"It's the chicken or the egg thing," Patronek says. "These dogs might have come to the house behaving badly and were put in the back yard to be out of sight, out of mind. Or maybe they were nice dogs to begin with but the family never bonded with them because they were kept outside all the time."

About 36 percent of U.S. households have at least one dog, and about 30 percent have at least one cat, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The study was funded by the Ralston Purina Co., two animal-welfare trust funds, and Purdue's Center for Applied Ethology and Human-Animal Interaction.

Other Purdue researchers were Dr. Lawrence T. Glickman, professor of veterinary epidemiology and environmental health; Professor Alan M. Beck, director, Center for Applied Ethology and Human-Animal Interaction; and George P. McCabe Jr., professor of statistics. Dr. Carol Ecker, a veterinarian and president of Clayview Animal Clinic Inc., South Bend, also assisted.

Writer: Ellen Rantz http://www.adoptedpets.com/DogArticles/dog_owner_education.htm

Dog Training? A Public Confession

By Barbara Axel

So after 40 years of actively breeding, raising pups, competing and earning multiple titles my husband and I decided to retire from showing and just enjoy reading about others accomplishments and watching and cheering your activities from the sidelines.

Enter a new dog this Memorial Day weekend. Not planned at all. Not even a dachshund. A neighbor who lives in Florida but vacations in western NC and whose home is about a mile away called. Everybody in this area frequently calls the dog lady (me) with all kinds of canine questions. She told me a strange dog was found shivering and distressed under her deck, escaping from the heavy downpours that fell without stopping all weekend long. She fed him, and was keeping him dry on her deck, but he was full of fleas. The Frontline spray we gave her took care of the fleas....but she was leaving for Florida the following day. We visited her to get a look at this being. He was either an American foxhound or a treeing walker coonhound. Because of the scarcity of the former breed he had to be the latter.

So by default we became the temporary caretakers of a young adult treeing walker coonhound who, after lack of tattoos or chips and in spite of heavy advertising brought forth no owners, became our ward for the past few months. He was Heart Worm (HW) positive but was otherwise an exemplary guest. We got him back in condition in three weeks. HW treatment was begun, fully funded by a generous donor and a cut rate price by our own vet.



No dog remains on Camp Guthrie property without house manners, so, because he was to be kept quiet we taught him gently with only positive reinforcement. He learned quickly, and seemed eager to please. He was already accustomed to crates, and rode quietly in the car. He eliminated on leash, and otherwise walked quietly beside the handler. He learned the commands of collar on, and kennel up, and leave it when he spied Po'k Chop our cat. But a lifted hand brought forth a flinch, and he had no idea how to play. As he grew more confident, the gentle nature of his breed shone through. So did his tri colored coat that under the better nutrition developed ticking, and his kissy face that began smiling. Because of his sweet personality we named him Good Boy.

Heartworm treatment was completed by mid August without incident, so with no adopter in sight, we recently started some stricter obedience training. Sit. How difficult is that? Never mind raising and training my own generations of dachshunds. Thirty years as an obedience instructor, successfully teaching owners of all breeds including Great Danes, Irish Wolfhounds, Newfies, Akitas, Rotties etc., gave me complete confidence that this simple elementary exercise would be quickly and easily accomplished by a medium sized 47 pound dog. Good Boy had other ideas.

First we used a soft, smelly goodie held just above his head....you know the routine. Good Boy did not respond as all the other dogs had. He loves food. What gives? He first averted his eyes, then his head. Without a sound he told me I was invisible. Okay. I thought about it and used a new technique. I gently walked him to a corner against the wall, and placed my right hand flat on his sternum and used my left to caress along his back over his croup, and press inward at the stifle. Worked every time before.

However, this dog with super hard muscles had other ideas. He flexed his muscles and became a statue in bronze. Egads! my arthritic shoulder and arms were in pain and the dog did not move a muscle. So I decided that I would try this technique when sitting on the porch bench with the dog perpendicular to me. Finally the dog sat. But he sat so quickly that he compressed my arm between his stifle and the bench. Oh, pain! The dog now would not move from position. I could not release my arm or move from this position either.

Finally Joel came out to see where I was and Good Boy stood up. Joel guffawed, told me I was not doing it right and proceeded to show me how. Now it was time for his pain and my laughter.

We talked about whether Good Boy might have a physical problem, but realized the dog sits on his own for extended periods. No indication of physical inability. So I next tried praising him for sitting when he started to assume that position on his own, that is, when he was thinking about it. Alternated between voice and clicker. His response was to immediately avert his head, rise and walk away.

Okay you motivational freaks whose ranks used to include me, here was my come-uppance. I am now convinced this dog did not appear on my doorstep without heavenly planning. God must have a sense of humor.

For the next several days Joel and I became contortionists (don't ask) as we attempted to get this formerly Good Boy to sit on command. Don't even mention clicker training.

Thankfully there are no photos...and no witnesses except for what I'm sure was bellowing laughter from the heavens above. I am grateful for that, for the positions we got into were ridiculous....and not at all sublime...At one point I remember the dog looking at me as if I were crazy as reduced to desperation and a measure of insanity I grasped his tail and his collar and pulled both in different directions. Egads....I can't believe I said that. After 40 years of success I was reduced to what I would not have permitted ever even by my most regressive student. I can't believe I am confessing publicly, but if confession is good for the soul, writing this will help make me think before I offer my heretofore wise sage advice ever again.

Rescue dogs come with all types of emotional as well as physical baggage so we thought that something unpleasant may have happened to cause Good Boy's reluctance to obey this simple command. To preserve our sanity and what was left of our dignity we decided to abandon the sit.

Last evening after his dinner I called Good Boy to me. "Come and sit," I exclaimed. He did. What did I see? Must be an accident. So I released him and repeated the command. Huh? He sat again. Joel came out and he gave the command. Good Boy sat and smiled. Yes, smiled.

A friend asked me last night whether I had taught the dog to down yet. 

Barbara Axel, breeder/ trainer/exhibitor, Board Member of North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance (NCRAOA), has organized and participated in programs promoting responsible pet ownership since the late '60's. Positive interactions between dogs and children under the supervision of adults has been a primary goal.

Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.

Join NCRAOA. See our home page for membership information and application
For more information on animal health, training, reports on pet issues, animal sheltering, or to learn the difference between animal welfare and animal rights – visit our website at www.ncraoa.com

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