

Advice for Owners & Trainers on Greyhound Exposure to Fireworks

Purpose

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain recognises that some greyhounds are fearful of loud noises and that fireworks can have a negative impact on these dogs.

Affected greyhounds suffer psychological trauma and often cause themselves injuries in an attempt to run and hide from the noise. The following advice is intended to help owners and trainers to minimise the impact of fireworks on their greyhounds.

Risk Periods

The following times/events are deemed to be HIGH RISK meaning that it is highly likely that Greyhounds will be exposed to firework noise at these times.

- The Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings either side of 5th November.
- In certain locations, other cultural events, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, etc. may present a high risk for firework exposure depending on the population in the vicinity of the kennels.
- Of course, there is a constant lesser risk of spontaneous events at other times of the year.
- Check Local and Social Media for advance notice of any large organised displays planned for your area. This will allow time to prepare for the event and take necessary action to minimise the risk of greyhounds being exposed to fireworks at these times.

Tips to Help your Dogs on Firework Night

- Wherever possible keep all dogs indoors after dark to minimise exposure to fireworks.
- Feed early to allow dogs to settle well before dusk.
- Provide fearful dogs with a safe place to 'hide'. This is part of their coping strategy; this may be simply providing extra blankets or a duvet to burrow under.
- Dogs take their lead from humans, if we are calm and oblivious to the fireworks dogs may take some comfort from that. Excessive petting and

cuddling may reinforce the feeling that there is something to be scared of but if human contact helps a dog relax then that too is fine.

- If possible black out windows and play music or the television to mask the sound of the fireworks. Draping a blanket over the kennel door may help to block out sudden flashes.
- Make sure that kennels are secure and that no dog can escape if there's a sudden noise.
- If any dogs display extreme fear, then consider consulting your vet well in advance of high-risk periods to request a mild sedative to reduce anxiety. Be aware of the Rules regarding medication and seek specialist advice before resuming racing after administering any medication.
- Generally, firework phobia will get worse with time. There are longer term measures that may help to minimise the impact of sudden loud noises such as desensitising soundtracks that can be played at low volumes during times which a dog associates with something good/positive such as being fed or at 'playtime'. Ask your vet for advice on this.
- If dogs are required to race at high risk times, then consult with the Racing Manager and ask that anxious dogs are rested during these times to avoid transporting nervous dogs to the track where they may be exposed to further stress.
- If dogs must be transported during high risk times then don't leave them unattended at any time and implement measures to minimise the impact of the fireworks on the dogs (close the doors, turn on the engine, radio, etc.).