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PRESS RELEASE

HAPPY HOWL-O-WEEN

The Essential Guide for Keeping Your Pet Safe during the Halloween Season

Halloween, with all its costumes, candy and festivities, can actually be a very frightening time for family pets. It's up to us as responsible pet owners to keep our furry friends safe from harm.

The Collared Scholar, a full-service Dog Training Company, offers tips on how to keep your pet safe and happy on Halloween.

If your dog is used to an evening walk, try to take him out BEFORE the trick-or-treaters start their visits. Many normally calm and friendly dogs are frightened by people in costumes, so be sure to keep a firm grip on the leash just in case you do encounter something that scares your pup. Make sure your dog's collar isn't so loose that he can slip out of it should he become frightened and try to get away.

Find a secure place in your home to keep your pets, especially if you're giving out candy to trick-or-treaters. A quiet bedroom with the door shut or a crate is a great idea to keep your pets safe and reduce the risk of a pet slipping out the door when trick-or-treaters arrive. Provide safe chew toys, a favorite blanket, a piece of clothing with your scent on it, or whatever comforts your pet. Play soft music or leave a TV on so your pet has noise to distract him from the noises of trick-or-treaters. Place a pet/baby gate in front of your front door to block access in case someone accidentally lets your pet out of the place where he's confined.

If you want to have your dog near the door to greet visitors, keep him securely on leash. Pets can become very stressed by Halloween activities and interruptions in their normal routine. A nervous dog might feel threatened and end up biting, so in general it's far better to leave your pooch out of your Halloween festivities.

Keep ALL pets indoors on Halloween, even those that normally stay outside. In addition to the possibility of a frightened pet escaping your yard, there have been numerous reports of severe animal cruelty, pet poisonings and pet theft on Halloween. In addition, make sure your pet has a current ID tag and/or is microchipped with your contact information. That way, if your pet does escape, you are far more likely to have a happy reunion.

Keep pets out of the candy bowl! Throw away any candy wrappers before your pets have a chance to get to them, since the wrappers can cause choking or intestinal obstruction. Make sure your pets can't get into the trash to get wrappers or discarded candy. Chocolate is especially dangerous to dogs, since it contains theobromine, which can be fatal. If you notice any of these symptoms of chocolate poisoning, go to your vet or an emergency vet right away because your pet's life may be in danger:

- ✓ Excessive drooling
- ✓ Excessive urination
- ✓ Pupil dilation
- ✓ Rapid heartbeat
- ✓ Vomiting and diarrhea
- ✓ Hyperactivity
- ✓ Muscle tremors and seizures
- ✓ Coma

Explain to everyone in your home (especially children) how dangerous our Halloween treats are to pets, and make it a rule that no one can share those treats with pets, no matter how much begging your pets do. Also, caution children about leaving candy wrappers on the floor.

Make sure pets can't reach candles, jack-o-lanterns, decorations or ornaments. If you're having a party in your home, crating your pet in a quiet area of the house away from the party is the best idea. This keeps your pet safe from the possibility of escaping your home, getting into human food or beverages such as alcohol that can make your pet seriously ill, and from being frightened by the costumes and activity level of the party.

Pet Halloween costumes can stress out animals and pose safety and health hazards, so think twice before dressing up your pet. If you do decide to get your pet a costume, make sure they can breathe, see and hear, and that the costume is flame retardant. Remove any small or dangling accessories that could be chewed and swallowed.

If your pet is very high-strung, nervous or aggressive, consult your veterinarian about the possibility of a mild sedative for the night.

A few simple precautions and your knowledge of possible dangers to pets on Halloween can assure a safe, fun holiday for everyone!

Meagan Karnes-San Agustin and Katie Earle are the co-founders of The Collared Scholar. The Collared Scholar offers premier training and obedience services in the San Diego area. They are fully licensed and insured and their services include: Basic and Advanced Obedience, Agility, Anti-Aggression training, In-Kennel Training and Search and Rescue Training. The Collared Scholar also offers a full line of all natural products backed by years of research in pet health. The Collared Scholar also runs and operates a rescue program to help dogs in need. For more information, please visit www.collared-scholar.com or call 619-916-6767.

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