

Bang! It's that time of year again....



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How a microchip can keep pets safe during firework season



Every year, lost dogs and cats are handed in to veterinary practices and animal sanctuaries across the country and the process of reuniting them with their owners begins. This is where microchipping can be an invaluable tool in ensuring that these situations are brought to a happy conclusion.

It seems that every year, firework season starts a little earlier and lasts a little longer! Nowadays, fireworks aren't just restricted to the period around November 5th and start appearing in the shops as soon as the shelves have been cleared of summer goodies. With Halloween, Christmas and New Year also popular times for some fizz, pop and crackle, firework season can now easily span three months.

Whilst some of us enjoy the spectacle of a good firework display, it can be a time of utter misery for many pets, with the loud sounds, flashes and smells heralding a period of real fear and anxiety. It is therefore unsurprising to learn that this time of year sees a sharp spike in lost pet numbers, as frightened animals bolt for shelter. Numbers of runaways are also compounded by colder weather. Frosty fingers can easily lose grip on a lead during a chilly walk and doors and windows that may have remained opened all summer, are suddenly locked when a wandering cat returns home.

The law changed on 6th April 2016 and it is now compulsory for all owners to have their dogs microchipped and contact details kept up to date. Owners of dogs found by local authorities without a microchip, can face fines of up to £500 for non-compliance. Microchipping is not currently compulsory for cats, but vets and many animal charities are in agreement that the law should change to ensure that felines are offered the same level of protection. At Blacks, we have lots of lost cats brought in to us over the course of a year and witness first-hand how much difference microchipping could make at this distressing time.

If you haven't yet had your pet microchipped, don't worry, the process is very simple. The tiny microchip is administered to the back of the neck via injection and sits painlessly under the skin. There is no need for anesthetic as there is generally loose skin at the scruff of the neck, meaning most pets barely notice the application, particularly when they can smell a reward treat

in the offing! Visit the Microchipping section of our website www.blacksvets.co.uk for more info and a great, short film showing how quick and easy the process really is.

Each microchip contains a unique number which corresponds with your details held on a register. There are several government approved registers and at Blacks we use www.petlog.org.uk. A simple, hand-held scanner will quickly detect the presence of the microchip and its number, allowing owners to be identified on the register and contacted. For this reason, it is absolutely vital that your contact details are kept current. If you aren't sure that your pet is microchipped, you can simply pop in to one of our five Black Country branches and one of our reception team will be pleased to scan your pet free of charge. If you need to update your details after a home move, log onto www.petlog.org.uk and enter your microchip number to access your records.

As the law states that puppies must be microchipped by 8 weeks old, reputable breeders will usually ensure that pups are microchipped before they are handed over to their new owners. However, it's never too late to microchip your pet, and dogs, cats, rabbits, tortoises and horses can be protected at any age.

At Blacks, we're passionate about keeping pets safe and want as many runaways to be reunited with their owners as soon as possible. Every year we come across lost pets that haven't been microchipped and receive calls from desperate owners trying to locate a beloved animal. A common regret is that they didn't microchip their pets as they didn't believe it could happen to them. That's why from October to December we'll be offering our [microchipping service at the reduced rate of £15 \(usually £25.24\)](#). Book now for peace of mind this Autumn and Winter and help your four legged friends stay safe.

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*Terms and conditions may apply.



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