



## July 15 Declared National Pet Fire Safety Day to Help Protect Pets from Home Fires



Wildfires in California and Arizona remind us our pets are vulnerable to injury and death from smoke inhalation and flame. But did you know that counter-surfing or curious pets can also start fires accidentally?

Between 2006 and 2010, approximately 500 house fires each year were attributed to animal-related causes, says Nancy Schwartz of the National Fire Protection Association in Quincy, Mass. Not all of those animals were pets; wildlife or pests such as mice or rats may have also unwittingly started fires by chewing on wiring, for instance.

According to a recent AKC study, 88 percent of pet owners consider their pets to be valued family members so it makes sense to include them in fire prevention plans and rescue alerts should a house fire strike. As part of National Pet Fire Safety Day, AKC and ADT have developed helpful prevention, escape and rescue tips for pet owners.

### "National Pet Fire Safety Day" Tips to Keep Pets Safe from House Fires:

- Extinguish Open Flames - Pets are generally curious and will investigate cooking appliances, candles, or even a fire in your fireplace. Ensure your pet is not left unattended around an open flame and make sure to thoroughly extinguish any open flame before leaving your home. Use romantic bulbs instead of candles.
- Pet Proof the Home - Take a walk around your home and look for areas where pets might start fires inadvertently, such as the stove knobs, loose wires and other potential hazards.
- Secure Young Pets - Especially with young puppies, keep them confined away from potential fire-starting hazards when you are away from home.
- Stove Tops - If your dog is tall enough on his hind legs to counter surf, remove stove knobs whenever you leave the house. The NFPA says a stove or cooktop is the number-one cause of fires started by pets.

- Pet Water Dishes - Use stainless steel or ceramic pet water dishes on your wooden deck. Filtered and heated through glass and water, the sun's rays can ignite the wood beneath the bowl.
- Potential Hazards - Check your home for potential hazards such as loose wires, stove knobs, and piles of paper or other rubbish.

Ways to keep pets safe in the event of a fire:

- Keep collars on pets and place leashes near the door so first responders can use them to lead pets to safety. Pets are often waiting at doors and run out when firefighters come in.
- Provide animals with an escape route in the form of a pet door. If it's necessary to confine them, keep them in a room or area near an entry door so firefighters can find them easily. Pets are more likely to be injured or to die in a fire when they are locked in a kennel or room
- Make note of where your pets like to nap or hide in case you must evacuate your home quickly.
- Keep Pets Near Entrances – When leaving pets home alone, keep them in areas or rooms near entrances where firefighters can easily find them.
- Practicing Escape Routes with Pets – Keep collars and leashes at the ready in case you have to evacuate quickly with your pet or firefighters need to rescue your pet.
- Since Pets Left Alone Can't Escape a Burning Home – Use monitored smoke detectors which are connected to a monitoring center, providing an added layer of protection beyond battery-operated smoke alarms.
- Affix a Pet Alert Window Cling – Write down the number of pets inside your house and attach the static cling to a front window. This critical information saves rescuers time when locating your pets. You can obtain a free window cling by going to [www.adt.com/pets](http://www.adt.com/pets) or at AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Days events. Details are available at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).
- Keep Your Information Updated - Firefighters are familiar with pet alert window clings so keep the number of pets listed on them updated. Knowing the accurate number of pets in the house aids rescuers in finding all of your pets.

