

Cat Owners Urged to Protect Pets from Fire

Three organizations offer tips to help keep pets safe from home fires.

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Never leave your cat unattended near a burning fireplace or open flame. Protecting pets from fires is the goal of three organizations that recently teamed up to help save an estimated 500,000 animals affected in home fires each year.

The National Volunteer Fire Council, American Kennel Club and ADT Security Services hosted an event this week at the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department in Greenbelt, Md., to offer lifesaving tips.

Citing an AKC study that indicates 88 percent of pet owners consider cats and dogs to be valued family members, the groups also explained how home fire monitoring systems and smoke alarms can better protect animals left inside while owners are away from home.

Pets and fire safety tips: Extinguish open flames. Ensure your pet is not left unattended around an open fire, including candles and fireplaces, and extinguish open flames before leaving home.

Pet-proof your home. Look for areas around the house where pets might start fires inadvertently, such as the stove knobs and loose wires.

Secure young pets. Keep them safe from potentially fire-starting hazards when away from home.

Affix a Pet Alert window cling. Write the number of pets in the home and attach the static cling to a front window. This decal saves rescuers time when locating pets. ADT offers free clings.

Keep information updated. Firefighters are familiar with pet alert window decals, so keep the number listed on them current. Knowing the accurate number of pets in the house aids rescuers in finding all pets and provides important information so firefighters do not put themselves or others at risk on the job.

Install smoke alarms with working batteries. Change the batteries on your smoke alarm twice a year, and test it monthly.

Consider monitored smoke detection services. Security companies provide monitored smoke detection services to quickly alert fire departments in an emergency. This could provide added protection for pets.

“One of the hallmarks of responsible dog ownership is keeping pets safe and planning for unexpected emergencies, including house fires,” said Lisa Peterson, AKC spokesperson. “This year we are pleased to distribute ADT pet alert window clings at our events in New York City and Raleigh, N.C., to focus attention on how to potentially save pets’ lives.”