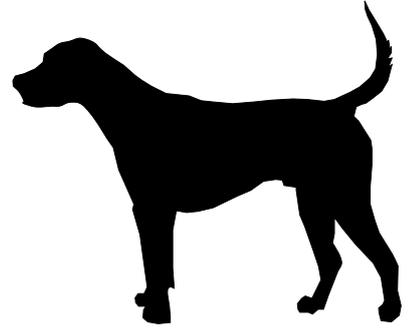


THUNDERSTORMS

For some dogs, a thunderstorm can feel like the end of the world. This means they truly feel like their life is in danger and that is really scary! Unfortunately we are not able to explain to our dogs that they are in fact safe but there are ways that we can help them to cope with this event.



HELPING YOUR DOG WEATHER THE STORM

First of all we need to keep an eye on the weather forecast to know if a thunderstorm is expected! Sometimes they happen without warning but if there is any possibility then it is best to be prepared. Lightening tracker is a great app to follow.

- Allow your dog access to inside the house to help them to feel safer. This can also prevent escape attempts if they panic.
- Make sure they have access to their safe spots – this might be their bed, the crate, a specific room or even under or behind objects. For example, some dogs feel safest under your bed and if that is the case then it is best to allow it. If your dog does not currently have a safe spot then we suggest considering crate training – please refer to the Crate training handout.
- Adaptil pheromone therapy can be used in their safe spot to help them to feel more secure. Please talk to AVBS for more information about Adaptil.
- Use other sound to block the thunder – AVBS recommends calming music specifically designed for dogs. “Through a Dog’s Ear” is available on Spotify and iTunes and from the website icalmpet.com. If you think a storm may happen while you are away from the house this can be left on all day.
- If your dog seeks out interaction you can comfort them. It is not possible to reinforce fear by being kind and comforting.
- If it is possible for your dog to focus on another activity you can try practicing foundation exercises or playing with a favourite toy. If they are too worried then this is not suitable.
- Trigger medication should be administered at least 1.5 hours before the storm which is not easy to predict. Therefore it is often best to medicate if a storm is forecasted, whether it actually occurs or not. Discuss with your AVBS vet further about specific details for your dog.