

October 21, 2013

Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

If someone came running at you making loud noises and carrying an object, what would you do? Your defense mechanism may tell you to strike back. Dogs may react in the same way if a child or adult approaches in what the dog may see as a threatening manner. Now imagine that the child or adult is wearing a Halloween costume.

Children and adults in costumes, toys and gadgets that make ghostly sounds, and a never-ending trail of people ringing the doorbell can be unsettling for your four-legged friends during the Halloween season.

The Burleson Animal Shelter, Humane Society and Doggone Safe offer the following tips for dog owners as well as for children and their parents.

Dog owners:

- Secure your dog behind a closed door or in a crate in a room away from the front door or from the party if you are hosting at your house.
- Give your pet a Kong or other hollow chew toy stuffed with soft dog treats or give your pet a favorite chew toy.
- Play music or leave a TV or radio playing in the dog's room to help mask the sounds of the activity at the front door.
- Close drapes and blinds so the dog doesn't see people coming and going.
- If you have a dog that barks at the sound of the doorbell, disconnect it or watch for trick-or-treaters so that they do not have to ring or knock.
- Puppies and dogs that like to chase can get overly excited by costumes with dangly bits or streaming material. Supervise very carefully if you have a dog that may try to play with your children's costumes while they are wearing them. Teach children to Be a Tree and stand still if the dog does start nipping at their costume since the more they move, the more excited the dog will get.
- Keep your dogs (and cats) indoors around Halloween time. Pets have been stolen, injured or poisoned as part of Halloween pranks or other rituals.

Kids and Parents:

- Never approach any dog, even if you know him. The dog may not recognize you in your costume.

- If an owner opens the door and there is a dog there, just stay still and wait for the dog owner to put the dog away. You can tell them you do not want to come near the dog. Do not move toward the person and dog. Wait for them to come to you to give you your candy. Wait for them to close the door before you turn and leave.
- If a dog escapes just stand still and Be a Tree (hands folded in front, watching your feet). He will just sniff you and then move on. Wait for the owner to come and get the dog before you turn away.
- If you meet a loose dog, Be a Tree and wait until the dog goes away.
- It is best to ignore other people's dogs on Halloween if you meet them out walking. The dog may be worried about all the strange creatures that are out and about. Even if you know the dog, the dog may not recognize you in your costume.

If you can't resist dressing your pet up for Halloween, forget the masks and make sure the costumes are comfortable and don't pose a risk for injury. Keep candy out of your pets' reach. Chocolate and other ingredients can be toxic. And keep your pets away from Halloween decorations. Hanging decorations can pose a choking hazard, as can fake cobwebs.

If you do take your dog trick or treating with you, make sure they are wearing their collars and identification tags and that they are microchipped. You can get your pets microchipped at the Burlison Animal Shelter for \$15, regardless of where the pet owner lives. The owner must provide proof of rabies vaccination to get the microchip. Each chip has a unique identification number that links a pet to the owner's personal information so if a dog or cat is lost, chances of being reunited with the owner are good.

If your pet runs away during the Halloween festivities, it is extremely important to stop by the Burlison Animal Shelter and view the animals at least once every 72 hours while the pet is lost. Owners need to make a report with the Burlison Animal Shelter staff at animalshelter@burlesontx.com. When calling to report a missing pet, include the owner's name, owner's address, and contact phone numbers and description of the pet. Include any identification tag numbers the pet may be wearing. You can file a report on the City website at <http://www.burlesontx.com/requesttracker.aspx>. You can also post the information and pictures on the Burlison Animal Shelter Facebook page, www.facebook.com/burlesonanimalshelter.

For more information about pet safety or to get your pet microchipped, stop by the Burlison Animal Shelter at 775 S.E. John Jones Dr. The shelter is open 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday. Call 817-426-9283.