

Treatment

Create A Safe Zone

Avoiding the stimulus is ideal. However, if that's impractical, minimizing its intensity is the next best option. Have the owner:

- Create a safe zone in an interior room, away from windows, if possible. If not, draw the blinds or use blackening shades to help prevent flashes of light, which are predictive of the noise associated with thunderstorms or fireworks.
- Choose an area where the dog tends to go on its own (e.g., in a bathroom, closet, or hallway; under a table). Help the owner pick the right place.
- Add white noise or use a fan to help muffle the noise associated with the trigger event(s). Alternatively, turn on music (make sure owners understand that it should be loud enough that it can help drown out the noise but not so loud that you frighten the dog even more).
- Add bedding and treats or a food-stuffed toy, cover the crate so it's den-like.
- Turn the lights on.
- Train a “go to place” cued behavior.
- Help strengthen the emotional association with the safe zone by doing things the dog enjoys there, like playing, training, or even feeding meals occasionally.

“ We want to teach the dog to go to their safe zone to relax when the frightening event is not happening too so he has an emotional attachment to the area – good things happen here; scary things do not.” –Dr. Bennett

