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Tame Halloween Fright with Bark Busters' Safety Tips for Families with Dogs

Guidelines from the world's largest dog training company help ensure canine companions don't get 'spooked' during the year's scariest holiday

ENGLEWOOD, CO, October 10, 2008 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Keep dogs safe during Halloween—the most dangerous holiday for dogs—with tips from Bark Busters, the world's largest dog training company. Based on the expertise of Bark Busters' network of dog behavioral therapists, who have successfully trained over 400,000 dogs worldwide, these guidelines for dog owners help ensure the safety of pets during fright night.

"Throughout our network of 255 franchises nationwide, we hear about more dogs dying or straying during Halloween than any other holiday," said Liam Crowe, CEO and master dog behavioral therapist of Bark Busters USA. "Halloween is intended to scare and startle us—making it a haunting holiday for dogs, too. By being more sensitive to dogs' fear-driven 'fight or flight' instincts, we can help keep our furry friends safe this Halloween."

Halloween brings a fun time for most of us, but for some of our much-loved four-legged family members, Halloween can be a nightmare. Dog owners may not be able to control external surroundings, but they can care for their dog's safety and well being by observing the following tips from the world's largest dog training company, Bark Busters:

- Don't leave your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, bring your dog inside where it is safe. If your dog is usually kept outside, bring him in a few times before the big night to get him used to being indoors. Your dog may be used to strangers, but so many little ghouls and goblins running about may be too much. Remember also that it is a natural instinct for dogs to protect the family from strangers, and on Halloween there will be no shortage of strangers.
- Keep your dog restrained. If your dog is timid or scared, or if he tends to love people a little too much, it is best to put him in a separate room away from the front door to limit his excitability, aggression, and chance of running outside and becoming lost.
- Reassure your dog. The best thing you can do for your dog when he is feeling unsettled by Halloween activities is to act as you normally would. By over-reassuring your dog or giving him an unusual amount of attention, you inadvertently can communicate to him that because you are acting differently, there must be something to worry about.
- Have your dog get used to costumes. Your dog may see his family members as strangers once they don their Halloween costumes. Before the kids put them on, allow your dog to scent the costumes. If your costume has a mask, keep the mask off when you are with your dog because dogs can become confused when they can't see our faces.
- Check your dog's ID tag. Be sure identification tags are secure on your dog's collar—just in case.
- Keep candy away from your dog. Many candies—especially chocolate—are toxic to dogs. The severity of the toxicity depends greatly on factors such as breed, age, size, and how much candy was ingested. Problems may range from a mild upset tummy to vomiting and diarrhea, or even death. If you have any concerns at all, consult with a veterinarian immediately. If you want to keep your dog safe, make certain that sweets, including their wrappers, are kept well away from your dog.
- Protect dogs from candles and pumpkins. Excited or agitated dogs can easily knock over a lit candle or pumpkin. Be sure those items are away from your dog's reach, or consider a battery-powered candle that does not burn
- Think twice about dressing your dog in a costume. While some dogs might enjoy being dressed up, many don't. Experiment first to see if your dog likes being in a costume. If so, fine—he'll most likely enjoy himself and the extra attention it brings. However, if he shows any resistance, don't do it. Dogs feel enough stress around Halloween without also having to endure the discomfort and peculiarity of wearing a strange costume.

- Be prepared. If you take your dog with you while trick-or-treating, be prepared at all times. Do not let your dog approach the door of a house, and stay clear of possible gags or gangs of goblins who will gather at the door. Dogs do not understand that the person jumping out at you will not hurt you; they often think they can only help you by acting aggressively. Neither children nor adults in costumes should approach a dog without the owner's consent.
- Have fun but think of your dog's safety. Finally, if you want your dog to be included in Halloween festivities, think about his safety much as you would the safety of a small child. Your dog does not understand Halloween, so he needs you to provide the guidance and safety that you always do.

Bark Busters dog behavioral therapists are renowned authorities on correcting dog behavior. The Bark Busters training system can successfully train any dog, including a puppy. The company's natural training technique leverages the same communications methods—body language and voice control—that dogs follow as part of their instinctual pack mentality. For more information or to locate a trainer, call 1-877-500-BARK (2275) or visit www.BarkBusters.com.

About Bark Busters

Bark Busters, the world's largest, most trusted dog training company, started in Australia in 1989 and came to the United States in 2000. Since inception, nearly 400,000 dogs have been trained worldwide using its dog-friendly, natural methods. With 250+ franchised offices in 42 U.S. and more than 400 offices in 10 countries, Bark Busters is continuing its mission to build a global network of dog behavioral therapists to enhance responsible dog ownership and reduce the possibility of maltreatment, abandonment and euthanasia of companion dogs. Bark Busters is the only international dog training company that offers a written lifetime guarantee. SPCA International selected Bark Busters dog behavioral training services as the "Best of the Best" in its category. No other training company or dog trainer has received such a distinction. To fetch a trainer in your area, call 1-877-500-BARK (2275) or visit www.BarkBusters.com, where dog owners can complete a Dog Behavioral Quiz to rate their dogs' behavior.