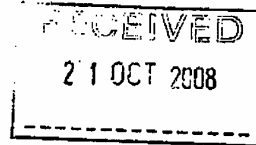


Dr Wai-yin Hatton  
Chief Executive  
NHS Ayrshire & Arran  
Eglinton House  
Ailsa Hospital  
Dalmellington Road  
AYR KA6 6AB



20 October 2008

Dear Dr Hatton

We all know that 5 November is one of the busiest times of the year for the fire brigade and accident and emergency services.

Not surprisingly, as the Scottish SPCA is Scotland's animal welfare charity, we are concerned about the dangers of fireworks to domestic and wild animals.

However, we have some proposals that we believe would not only help animals but also help address wider issues relating to fireworks and assist emergency services to the benefit of the broader community.

The most important element would be amending current legislation in terms of the sale of fireworks and when they can be used.

At present, fireworks can be used in public on any day of the year between 7am and 11pm, with extra dispensation for 5 November, Hogmanay, the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Fireworks can be sold from 15 October to 10 November, from 26 to 31 December and on the days of the Chinese New Year and Diwali and the three immediately preceding days.

We are therefore advocating the following changes and would appreciate your support:

- a) Fireworks should only be used during the hours already dictated by legislation on 5 November, Hogmanay, the Chinese New Year and Diwali. They should not be used on any other days of the year unless as part of a licensed event.
- b) Fireworks should only be on sale to the public one week before 5 November and not at all afterwards, with the current regulations pertained to Hogmanay, the Chinese New Year and Diwali continuing.

These changes would significantly limit the use of fireworks to a few key dates.

Our primary concern as you know is animal welfare, which is seriously compromised by the current legislation. Fireworks cause great distress to domestic pets, farm animals, horses and wildlife and frequently result in animals either being harmed or harming themselves.

Continued . . . . . /



**Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

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Our statistics show that recorded firework-related incidents begin each year in June or July and extend throughout the year.

In our view, it is essential that owners be afforded an opportunity to prepare their animals for this distress.

There are a number of measures owners can take, ranging from sedating their pets under veterinary supervision to simply bringing horses into their stables. But, without a change in legislation, they cannot be sure when to expect fireworks to begin and end.

However, this is only one part of the picture.

The widespread use of fireworks outside of the key dates we are proposing creates greater risk of fires and greater demands on the accident and emergency services over prolonged periods of time.

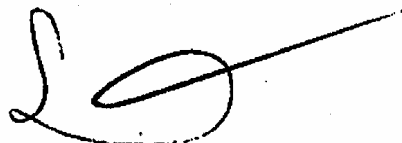
The current legislation provides more opportunity for disruptive elements to cause a public nuisance which again places greater demands on the emergency services.

The unrestricted use of fireworks throughout the year also creates more disruption for rural businesses, many of which depend on animals and form a significant part of the Scottish economy. The current situation also creates more disruptions for communities where fireworks parties frequently start within but then exceed the prescribed time limits. At this stage enforcement becomes more problematic and again increases demands on emergency services and as a side effect ill-feeling within communities and against local authorities and police forces which are frequently seen as responsible by not providing adequate enforcement.

Therefore, whilst we are primarily acting from an animal welfare perspective, we appreciate that no important issue can be considered in isolation and for the reasons outlined above believe that there are also very strong community and budgetary reasons for amending the legislation.

I do hope you can lend your support to this proposal, which are convinced is in the best interests of not only animals but also for local communities and the emergency services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stuart Earley', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**STUART EARLEY**  
Chief Executive