

# SAFE ON FOUR PAWS

It's difficult to be seen well in the dark, hence the saying "darkness favours secret dealings". Already in October we no longer have ten hours of daylight. The days are getting shorter, which makes the roads more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. People who regularly go for walks with their dogs should

take precautions. The specialist pet supplies chain Maxi Zoo points out things to be aware of and how you can make yourself visible to other road users.

Some walkers think firstly about themselves and their dog as they don't want to lose their pet. "I let my dog walk on the lead in the dark and there are no problems". Those who think like this are underestimating the dangers that lie in wait on the streets for pedestrians at this time of year:

- Obstacles and potholes on the pavement are easy to miss.
- Cyclists who often use the same paths as pedestrians may see dogs and their owners too late or they could notice just one of the two and end up cycling into a taut dog lead.
- Even car drivers can notice pedestrians too late. It can be especially risky in places where pavements and roads meet.



"See and be seen" should be the motto for all dog walkers in the dark. For people there are reflective belts or badges and clothing with reflective stripes. This sort of material bounces the light from oncoming vehicles back and can be seen by drivers from around 150 metres away. A dark clothed person, however, can only be seen from 30 metres away.

For your beloved dog a flashing light that attaches to the collar is suitable. Bright LEDs blink intermittently and are visible from over a hundred metres away. The same principle applies to flashing or light-up safety collars which are also reflective and can be easily attached over the normal collar or can be fixed around the lead. Dog safety vests can also provide good signals by reflecting back the light from vehicles. These are particularly suitable for free-running dogs. Finally, reflective leads are also available on the market, which ensure that both dog and owner cannot be missed.

This is still not enough, however – you don't just want to be seen, you also want to see well yourself so it's a good idea to take a torch with you on your walks!

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