

# Skunks in the neighbourhood :)



## How to avoid getting sprayed

You almost never hear of a person getting sprayed by a skunk, and that's because skunks are very reluctant to spray. They only do it as a last resort or when startled. Skunks usually give warning signs before they spray: stamping their feet, standing on their front legs, raising their tail in the air. If you see a skunk doing any of these things, back away slowly. As soon as the skunk feels you're at a safe distance, it should run off.

Remember that skunks have poor eyesight. If you see a skunk and it hasn't noticed you yet, talk to it softly to avoid surprising it.

## How to avoid your dog getting sprayed by a skunk

Dogs, on the other hand, do get sprayed by skunks sometimes. That's because they tend to run up to skunks and startle them. If you know you have a skunk in the neighbourhood, it's a good idea to keep your dog leashed—especially at dusk and at night when skunks are most active.

Before letting your dog into the yard, call out to the skunks to let them know. This may sound silly (and of course the skunks can't understand what you're saying!) but it gives the skunks a warning to get out of your yard. They don't want anything to do with your dog either.



## What to do if you or your dog already \*got\* sprayed by a skunk

Oops. Luckily, while the unique aroma of striped skunks is very strong and very distinct, it isn't toxic to people or pets. Skunk "smell" is actually an oil produced in a pair of the skunk's glands. While the smell can definitely travel and hang in the air, anything physically exposed to the oil will hold the smell longer.

There are a number of commercial skunk smell removal solutions on the market that work well. For do-it-yourselfers, a mixture of:

- 4 cups 3% hydrogen peroxide**
- ¼ cup baking soda**
- 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap**

does wonders to break down the oily substance and get the smell out of clothing, hair, skin, and anything else washable. Be aware that the peroxide may cause bleaching of fabric and hair or irritation of skin. Test a spot first, and be extra careful if using this mixture on humans or pets.

For lingering skunk smell in the air, use a can of shaving cream to make a "cream pie" on a dish or pie plate, and leave it in an area with good circulation. As the shaving cream dries, it will absorb some of the odor.

You can also try a bowl of white vinegar open to the air (works for paint smell too :)

info found on:

<https://www.torontowildlifecentre.com/>

Seeing a skunk is no cause for alarm. Skunks are a normal part of urban and suburban environments. Because they are shy and nocturnal, you don't see them as often as some other wildlife. Skunks are an important part of the ecosystem: they eat a lot of grubs and other harmful insects, fallen fruit, and garbage. Skunks even eat rats, mice, and other rodents.

Think of them as the local cleanup crew!