

PET EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TOOLKIT

FEMA RECOMMENDATIONS:

June is National Pet Preparedness month. While you should be prepared for pet emergencies year-round, this month offers an important reminder to review your family's emergency plans and ensure you've incorporated a plan for your pets as well.

Disasters can happen anytime, anywhere and can take many different forms, from barn fires or flooding caused by violent storms to earthquakes or gas line explosions. Depending upon where you live, possible natural disasters may vary—from hurricanes and blizzards to flooding and wildfires. Regardless of your location man-made disasters or emergency situations such as plane crashes, train derailments, chemical spills and widespread power outages could occur and prevent you from reaching your pets or force you to quickly evacuate.

Pet owners should create a pet-friendly family emergency plan, and it's essential that pet-care professionals, such as pet sitters and dog walkers have disaster plans for their pet-care businesses in place as well.

While no one is ever 100% ready for a disaster, a good plan can make a huge difference if it's thorough and flexible.

The following eight tips will help prepare you and your pets for a disaster:

1. Understand the possibilities. Recognize the different types of natural and man-made disasters that can occur in your area and know how to effectively plan for them.
2. Plan your response. Different disasters require different courses of action. The sooner you create a disaster plan, the more time you have to prepare.
3. Update identification. Make sure your pet wears current identification at all times that includes his name, rabies tag, and your cell phone number since you will not be at home.
4. Keep your pet's records handy. Create a file for each pet that contains health history, vaccination dates, and a recent photo. Keep your file in a safe and secure place.
5. Research animal-friendly places. If a disaster forces you to evacuate, the best thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them as well. Know where you can take your pet in the event of an emergency. Evacuation shelters and pet-friendly hotels outside a 60-mile radius of your home are good places to start. Websites like BringFido.com and GoPetFriendly.com offer searchable directions of pet-friendly lodging options.
6. Stock up on emergency supplies. Keep extra leashes, bowls, newspapers, trash bags, cat litter, litter pans, and at least a five-day supply of pet food and water on hand. Be sure you have a pet first aid kit as well.
7. Get a carrier. Have a properly-sized pet carrier for each pet. Carriers should be large enough for the pet to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably.
8. Communicate your plan.

In addition to communicating your disaster plan, it's important to make sure that any pet sitter or dog walker you use also has a disaster plan in place should they be caring for your pet(s) when disaster strikes. If you are in need of a professional pet sitter or dog walker, visit PSI's Pet Sitter Locator, the largest online directory of professional pet sitters and dog walkers at www.petsit.com/locate.

ATLANTIC COUNTY, NJ ANIMALS IN EMERGENCIES

<https://www.atlantic-county.org/animal-shelter/tips-disasters.asp>

The following information has been prepared by the Humane Society of the United States in cooperation with the American Red Cross.

Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. Here's how you can be prepared to protect your pets when disaster strikes.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse. So, prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

Have A Safe Place to Take Your Pets

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives, or other outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supply Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:

- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, portable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener. Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

Know What to Do as A Disaster Approaches

Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.

- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification.
- Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

Special Pet Considerations

Birds

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruit and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

Reptiles

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase, but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site. If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad. When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

Pocket Pets

Small mammals (hamsters, ferrets, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.

ASPCA RECOMMENDATIONS

Horses

- Keep a clean and tidy stable and pasture. Remove hazardous and flammable materials, debris, and machinery from around the barn's walkways, entrances and exits. Regularly maintain and inspect barn floors and septic tanks. Inspect your grounds regularly and remove dangerous debris in the pasture.
- Prevent fires by instituting a no-smoking policy around your barn. Avoid using or leaving appliances on in the barn, even seemingly-harmless appliances like box fans, heaters, and power tools can overheat. Exposed wiring can also lead to electrical fires in the barn, as can a simple nudge from an animal who accidentally knocks over a machine.
- Get your horse used to wearing a halter, and get him used to trailering. Periodically, you should practice quickly getting your horse on a trailer for the same reason that schools have fire drills—asking a group of unpracticed children to exit a burning building in a calm fashion is a little unrealistic, as is requesting a new and strange behavior of your horse.
- If you own a trailer, please inspect it regularly. Also, make sure your towing vehicle is appropriate for the size and weight of the trailer and horse. Always make sure the trailer is hitched properly—the hitch locked on the ball, safety chains or cables attached, and emergency brake battery changed and linked to a towing vehicle. Proper tire pressure (as shown on the tire wall) is also very important.
- Get your horse well-socialized and used to being handled by all kinds of strangers. If possible, invite emergency responders and/or members of your local fire service to interact with your horse. It will be mutually beneficial for them to become acquainted. Firemen's turnout gear may smell like smoke and look unusual, which many horses find frightening—so ask them to wear their usual response gear to get your horse used to the look and smell.
- Keep equine veterinary records in a safe place where they can quickly be reached. Be sure to post emergency phone numbers by the phone. Include your 24-hour veterinarian, emergency services and friends. You should also keep a copy for emergency services personnel in the barn that includes phone numbers for you, your emergency contact, your 24-hour veterinarian, and several friends.

Other ASPCA Recommendations

1. Get a Rescue Alert Sticker: This easy-to-use sticker will let people know that pets are inside your home. Make sure it is visible to rescue workers (we recommend placing it on or near your front door), and that it includes the types and number of pets in your home as well as the name and number of your veterinarian. If you must evacuate with your pets, and if time allows, write "EVACUATED" across the stickers. Absecon Veterinary Hospital has free stickers available. Please ask for one the next time you come to the hospital.
2. The ASPCA recommends microchipping your pet as a more permanent form of identification. A microchip is implanted under the skin in the animal's shoulder area, and can be read by a scanner at most animal shelters.

Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster. Pets can become disoriented and wander away from home in a crisis.

Store an emergency kit and leashes as close to an exit as possible. Make sure that everyone in the family knows where it is, and that it is clearly labeled and easy to carry. Items to consider keeping in or near your "Evac-Pack" include:

- Pet first-aid kit and guide book (ask your vet what to include);

- 3-7 days' worth of canned (pop-top) or dry food (be sure to rotate every two months);
- Disposable litter trays (aluminum roasting pans are perfect);
- Litter or paper toweling;
- Liquid dish soap and disinfectant;
- Disposable garbage bags for clean up;
- Pet feeding dishes and water bowls;
- Extra collar or harness as well as an extra leash;
- Photocopies and/or USB of medical records and a waterproof container with a two-week supply of any medicine your pets require (Remember, food and medications need to be rotated out of your emergency kit—otherwise they may go bad or become useless).
- At least 7 days' worth of bottled water for each person and pet (store in a cool, dry place, and replace every two months).
- A traveling bag, crate, or sturdy carrier, ideally one for each pet;
- Flashlight;
- Blanket;
- Recent photos of your pets (in case you are separated and need to make "Lost" posters);
- Especially for cats: Pillowcase, toys, scoop-able litter;
- Especially for dogs: Extra leash, toys, and chew toys.

You should also have an emergency kit for the human members of the family. Items to include: batteries, duct tape, flashlight, radio, multi-tool, tarp, rope, permanent marker, spray paint, baby wipes, protective clothing, and footwear, extra cash, rescue whistle, important phone numbers, extra medication, and copies of medical and insurance information.

A Final Word

If you must evacuate, do not leave your animals behind. Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. (Remember, pets are not allowed in Red Cross Shelters). If there is a possibility that disaster may strike while you are out of the house, there are precautions you can take to increase your pets' chances of survival, but they are not substitute for evacuating with your pets.