

Disaster Preparedness for Pets

If you are like millions of animal owners across the country, your pet is an important member of your household. The best way to protect your pet from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan that includes planning for your pet whether you stay at home or evacuate.

If you evacuate, leaving your pets behind is likely to result in their being injured, lost or worse. The single most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to take them with you. However, it is important to understand that many public shelters, including the Red Cross, cannot accept pets (except for service animals). So, plan ahead to take your pets to a safe place.

TIPS TO PLAN FOR YOUR PETS IN AN EVACUATION

Plan Ahead for Shelter

- Ensure your pet wears an up-to-date ID at all times. Include a phone number for a friend or relative outside your immediate area.
- Plan ahead to make sure you have a place to take your pets.
- Contact hotels and motels outside your area to check policies for accepting pets in an emergency. Identify boarding facilities and veterinary offices that might shelter animals. Keep a list and call ahead for reservations as soon as you think you might need to evacuate.
- Ask friends and relatives outside your area if they could keep your pets
- If you have more than one pet, be prepared to shelter them separately

Assemble a Disaster Pet Supply Kit

Keep essential supplies in an accessible place, in sturdy containers. Include:

- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and a crate or carrier

- Medications, medical records and phone number of veterinarian in a waterproof container and a first aid kit
- 3 day supply of food and potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener
- Current photos of your pets (if they get lost)
- Pet beds and toys if easily transported

As a Disaster Approaches

- Pay attention to disaster alerts and warnings. Take steps to protect your pet at the first sign of a disaster.
- Call to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets
- Check you pet disaster supplies and make sure they are ready to go.
- Bring all pets into the house so you don't have to search for them if you must leave in a hurry
- If possible, arrange in advance for a neighbor or pet sitter to take your pets if you are not at home
- Attach the name and number of your emergency phone to your pets collar/ID tag

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Reaching Shelter and After the Disaster

- Remember animals react differently under stress
- Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed or in their crate. Transport cats in carriers.
- Don't leave your pets unattended anywhere they can run off (pets may panic, hide, try to escape, bite or scratch)
- Give your pets time to get back into their routines once they return home
- Don't allow your pets to roam loose. Familiar landmarks and smells may be gone and your pet could become disoriented and lost

Birds

- Transport birds in a secure travel cage or carrier.
- In cold weather, wrap a blanket around the cage and warm up the car before putting birds inside
- During warm weather carry a mister and mist your bird's feathers
- Do not put water inside cage during transport
- Provide birds with a few slices of fruit and vegetables having high water content
- Have a photo identification and leg bands
- Keep the carrier in a quiet area and don't let the birds out

Reptiles

- Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but must be placed in more secure housing upon reaching your destination
- Carry the food your snake will need
- Take a large heating pad and water bowl for soaking
- For transport of house lizards follow the directions for birds

If you can't take your pets with you do not leave them chained outdoors or roaming free. Bring them inside and leave them in a room with no windows but with adequate ventilation (laundry room, garage, etc). House cats and dog separately, even if they usually get along. Only leave dry foods and fresh water in non-spill or auto feed containers. (Consider leaving food your pets are not wild about to prevent bingeing) Place a sticker on a door indicating the number of animals inside.