



Emergency Pet Preparedness

Remember to include your
pets in your plan

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When Hurricane Katrina struck the southern coast of the United States in August 2005, pet owners learned an all-too-valuable lesson about the importance of disaster preparedness. At any time, an emergency situation may require you to evacuate your home for an extended period. While it isn't possible to prevent a natural catastrophe from occurring, pet owners can provide for their animals by planning ahead of time and being prepared in the event of an emergency.

ARRANGE A SAFE HAVEN

Due to public health and safety reasons, the Red Cross does not allow animals into its facilities. Therefore, it is imperative that pet owners research safe places to take their pets during an evacuation. Some hotels will allow animals, and your veterinarian can provide you with information on preferred kennels or veterinary hospitals with boarding facilities.

No matter where you decide to go during an evacuation, it is absolutely essential that you always evacuate with

your pets. Unforeseen circumstances during a disaster can turn a brief evacuation into a much longer stay away from home. Remember: If it is not safe for you to be home, it is not safe for your animals either.

CREATE A PET EVACUATION KIT

An evacuation is often stressful and rushed. To ensure that you have all the items necessary to provide proper care for your pets, it is helpful to pack an evacuation kit in advance. The kit should include enough materials for each of your pets and should be stored in an area that is easily accessible to every family member. The kit should include:

- A waterproof container that holds your pets' current medical records, including vaccinations; your veterinarian's contact information; your pets' license information; photographs of your pets (with species, breed, age, sex, color, and characteristic markings listed on the back); photographs of you and your pets together (to prove ownership); and a phone number for an emergency clinic near your destination
- A first-aid kit for pets (For information on what to include in this kit or to purchase a prepackaged kit, visit www.aspc.org and click on

"Disaster Preparedness.")

- A two-week supply of water, pet food, and pet medications with dosage instructions
- A leash, collar, and harness for each pet
- Carriers that include your contact information
- No-spill bowls for food and water
- A manual can opener and spoon for canned food
- Toys and treats to make your pets feel comfortable
- Pet beds and blankets
- Paper towels
- Cleaning solution
- A rescue whistle
- Trash bags
- A flashlight
- A radio (solar- and battery-operated)
- Extra batteries

For each dog:

- A crate or collapsible cage
- Cage liners

For each cat:

- A small bag of cat litter, a litter scoop, and a disposable litter tray
- A pillowcase or mesh bag

PREPARE PROPER IDENTIFICATION

Always make sure that your pets have clearly marked identification in case they are separated from you. The ideal source of identification is a microchip,

as this is a permanent marker that cannot be lost during transport. Other forms of identification include a collar with tags or a waterproof pouch to hold identification papers.

INCLUDE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Before a disaster strikes, pet owners can work with family and friends to form a joint plan of action. Arrange with a trusted pet lover to have access to your house should you not be home when an evacuation is ordered. Make sure that all people involved are familiar with your evacuation plan and have all pertinent information about your animals, such as medical records.

It is beneficial to find a responsible person who can temporarily or permanently care for your animals if you are not available. The conditions of this situation should be carefully considered and discussed with the person involved. More information on this topic and on pet trusts can be found at www.aspc.org.

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While disasters are unpredictable and stressful, pet owners can plan properly to ensure that their pets remain safe, healthy, and happy during evacuation. **HP**

During a Disaster

At the first sign of a disaster or evacuation warning, pet owners should take immediate action to prepare all members of the family to leave the area. Family members should call safe havens to confirm shelter arrangements, secure animals in carriers (small animals) or on leashes (large animals), and bring all emergency supplies, including the evacuation kit, to the nearest exit. To prevent pets from wandering off and becoming lost, pets should not be permitted outside during this time.

