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## Reptile Emergency Preparedness Plan

When it comes to caring for reptiles during a power outage, an ounce of prevention will go much further than a pound of cure, which is why we've put this guide together for you!

There are several factors to take into consideration when putting together your emergency supplies, namely, the number of animals you have, the types and species of each, and what you might already have on hand.

In a perfect world, everyone would already have a backup generator ready to go as soon as the power goes out, but in the event that you do not have a generator, here is a supply list and some tips to help keep your reptiles safe during power outages.

Supplies to have on hand:

- Styrofoam coolers or insulated boxes – the thicker, the better!
  - If you are using lidded Styrofoam coolers, it is critical that you ventilate the cooler as they can become airtight with the fitted lid in place. We recommend making four ¼" holes – this will ensure enough air flow into the cooler for your reptiles as well as any heat pack you are using.
  - If you are making your own insulated boxes, you can go to the hardware store to purchase thick cardboard boxes (think moving or storage boxes) and insulation paneling. Look for thick insulation with a high R-value. Measure and cut your insulation into panels that will snugly line all sides, top, and bottom of the inside of your box. You will want to poke a few holes through the cardboard and insulation for ventilation and to keep the heat packs going.
- Heat packs/animal shipping warmers – these come in various durations, but we recommend either 40- or 72-hour heat packs. Do not open your heat packs until necessary!
  - Periodically check your heat packs to ensure they are still soft and pliable inside the wrapper – if your heat pack is hard or has hard chunks, it has likely been compromised and will probably not work.
  - Do not open your heat pack until you need to – as soon as the wrapper has been opened, the heat pack will start generating heat.
  - Do not use hand warmers – they burn too hot and too fast and you risk seriously injuring or killing your animals!
- Packing tape to attach your heat pack to the underside of the top insulation panel or cooler lid – do not tape over the red line – instead, tape the edges of the heat pack to the panel or lid.
- Clean towels or small blankets.
- Clean water and water dishes for your animals.

- Reusable hot water bottle – if you are able to heat water, these can help keep your animals warm for a bit, though do not make the water too hot and be sure to wrap the water bottle in towels or a blanket to avoid any burns.
- Reptile bags/pillowcases and ventilated deli cups – these will help keep your animals secure while inside the cooler or insulated box. You can put multiple animals in the same box, and doing so can actually help them keep each other warmer longer.
- Battery powered probe thermostats – one for each cooler or insulated box. These will help you keep an eye on temps inside the insulated container without needing to open them, which would release any warmth you have trapped inside.
- Jars of organic baby food and/or canned vegetables with no added salt or sugar – these will work in a pinch for daily feeders such as lizards. **\*\*NOTE:** avoid feeding your reptiles if you can! Reptiles need heat to properly digest food, so when heat is not readily available, feeding your reptile could cause more harm than good! Most reptiles can go a while without food, but they will all need clean water.

What to do when the power goes out:

If the power is not expected to return relatively quickly, start bagging and/or cupping your animals to place them into the insulated box or coolers. Keeping multiple animals in the same box will help them keep each other warmer than one animal per box – it's all about thermal mass!

Move all your animals into a smaller room with a door, such as the bathroom – smaller rooms retain more heat than larger, more open rooms. Keep the door closed as much as you can, and keep the animals away from any windows.

Try not to open the insulated boxes or coolers and use battery operated temp probes to keep an eye on temps inside the box – try to conserve your heat packs while you can!

Use any available hot water you have left to fill reusable hot water bottles to conserve your heat packs – wrap them in a towel to keep your animals from getting burned.

If you need to start using heat packs, keep in mind that the goal is not to heat the inside of the box or cooler, but to keep the inside from getting too cold – reptiles will generally bounce back from the cold without any lingering effects as long as they are able to warm up slowly – do not try to warm up a cold reptile too quickly!

Only use one heat pack per insulated box or cooler and be sure to tape the heat pack to the underside of the top insulation panel or lid with the red stripe facing into the box – you do NOT want the heat pack to come in contact with your animals! You can try to extend the life of your heat pack by loosely wrapping it in a sheet or two of newspaper before taping it to the lid/top panel – this will help limit the speed of the chemical reaction within the heat pack, but take care not to suffocate the heat pack, as it will not re-start once it has burned out!

If all else fails, cuddle your critters and share your body heat.

Good luck and we hope this helps!

Your friends at ShipYourReptiles