

## **Disaster Plan for Your Pets**

**Take your pets with you if you evacuate.** If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for them. Leaving them may endanger you or others, your pets and emergency responders. Evacuate early, while it's still safe to get your animals out and before you may be ordered to leave them behind.

**Plan in advance where you will go if you evacuate.** Pets (other than service animals) are usually not allowed in public shelters. Some communities have established sheltering options for pets. Locate potential boarding facilities, veterinarians or community resources in advance. Ask friends, relatives or others outside your area if they could shelter your animals in an emergency. Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on the number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency.

Once a disaster hits, contain / confine your animals so they can be easily accessed. As soon as local authorities say trouble is on the way, bring your pets indoors (in their carriers if evacuation is likely).

Have a back-up plan in case it's impossible to take your animals with you when you evacuate. Consider different types of disasters and whether your animals would be better off in a house / barn, fenced, or loose.

Share your evacuation plans with friends and neighbors. For large animals, post detailed instructions in several places --- including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer, and barn entrances – to ensure emergency workers can see them in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself. For more information on caring for horses in a disaster, see **Large Animal Evacuation.**

### **Prepare your Pet Disaster Supplies Kit**

- Medications and medical records stored in a waterproof container and a first aid kit. A pet first aid book or app for your phone is good to have on hand.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, muzzle if needed, jackets and carriers to transport pets safely. Make sure the carrier is large enough to be comfortable if your pet has to stay in it for a long period of time while you have taken shelter away from home.
- Provide comfort items in the carrier, such as blankets, towels or special toys.
- Pre-made "LOST" poster with current photos and descriptions of your pets to help others identify them in case you and your pets become separated and to prove that

they are yours. Have your pets microchipped for easy identification. Have proof of vaccinations. Have ID information on your pet's collar.

- Food and water for at least 3 - 7 days for each pet, bowls and a manual can opener.
  - 1 quart water per day per 10 lbs. cat
  - 1 gallon water per day per 40 lbs. dog
  - 12 to 20 gallons water per day per horse
- Cat litter, litter box and scoop.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems and the name and telephone number of your veterinarian.
- Other useful items include newspapers, paper towels, pee pads, poop bags, bleach, plastic trash bags and grooming items.
- Periodically review the items in your pet "go kit" and replenish as necessary. Make sure medical records are updated regularly.

### **Create a plan in case you are not at home when disaster strikes**

- Have documentation by your front door for first responders with information about pets in the home or large animals on the property. Include pictures, animal descriptions, vaccination records and instructions on how to handle or evacuate.
- Have a "Buddy" system with a neighbor or friend. Give your buddy a key and instructions. Make sure the neighbor is familiar with your pets and where to find emergency information, including an evacuation plan and pet disaster supply kit / food.
- Your buddy may need keys to your house, gates, or supply sheds in order to access pet(s) and / or their supplies.
- Exchange contact information, so your buddy knows how to reach you.
- Make sure your buddy and your animals have met and are comfortable with one another.
- Give your buddy a signed letter authorizing them to get necessary emergency treatment for your animals in case you cannot be reached.
- If your buddy is willing to evacuate your animals, review disaster supplies and plans. Communicate a place for you and your buddy to meet if possible.

### **Practice**

Practice evacuating your animals. Have their carriers in their environment periodically and make it comfortable for them to be in the carriers. Get your animals used to riding in the car. Be sure to include night-time drills with your pets.

### **Post Disaster**

Your home may be a very different place after the emergency is over, and it may be hard for your pets to adjust.

- While you assess the damage, keep animals under direct control and inside carriers / trailers.
  - Fences and gates may have been damaged.

- Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans.
- If your community has been flooded, search your home and yard for wild animals that may have sought refuge there.
- Don't allow your animals to roam loose. Pets may become disoriented, particularly if the disaster has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home.
- Be patient with your pets after a disaster. Try to get them back into their normal routines as soon as possible. Be ready for behavioral problems caused by the stress of the situation.

### **Reference Information**

- Pet first aid classes: <http://www.redcross.org/>
- Animal Disaster Response Training:
  - ASPCA: <http://www.aspcapro.org/fir>
  - FEMA: <http://www.training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>
  - Red Rover: <http://www.redrover.org/>
- To record important information about your pet, see the **AnimalInformationForm.pdf**