

Disaster Preparedness for Pet Owners

Before an emergency develops it is important for pet owners to have a plan for their pets. In the event of a disaster pet owners may need to evacuate their residence and go into a shelter. The American Red Cross does not allow pets in mass shelter facilities and you will need to have a safe place for your pets. Depending upon the type of disaster, families could be displaced from their homes for a period of a few days up to several weeks, and in some cases not have a home to return to.

To Prepare Your Pet for Disaster:

- Have a current photograph that shows distinguishing marks and colors.
- Plan for evacuation – make sure you have a place to take your animals.
- Contact your local animal shelter, humane society, or veterinarian to determine locations where animals can be treated or kept in an emergency.
- Identify hotels and motels that accept pets. www.petswelcom.com has a database of lodging that allows pets.
- Put a sign on your door identifying the number and types of animals – also list pet names and favorite hiding places.
- Keep an information sheet on each animal that lists their history, medications and special needs.
- Contact a neighbor and plan how you would care for each other's pets in the event one of you aren't home if a disaster strikes.
- Decide on safe locations in your house where you could leave your pet in an emergency.
- Keep the toilet seat up and if possible leave the water faucet on in the bathtub with a slow drip.
- If you live in an area prone to natural disaster consider using the Finder System ID tag for your pet.

Pet Disaster Supply Kit:

- Proper identification, including immunization records.
- Ample supply of food and water.
- A carrier or cage for each animal.
- Medications.
- Muzzle, collar and leash.
- Blanket

During the Disaster:

- Bring pets in from outdoors in cases of inclement weather. Never leave them tied up outdoors.
- In cases of flooding keep your pets in an upper level.
- Keep pets separated.

After the Disaster:

- If pets cannot be found after a disaster, contact the local animal control office to find out where lost animals can be recovered. Bring along a picture of your pet.
- After a disaster animals can become aggressive or defensive; monitor their behavior.