

Pets and Disasters: GET PREPARED



Have a Safe Place to Take Your Pets

Disaster shelters typically cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animal in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead —

- Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including phone numbers with other disaster information and supplies. Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets. If you notice an impending disaster, call ahead for reservation
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affect area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include a 24 hour phone number
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.



Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supply Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers than can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include —

- Medication and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems and the name and number of veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable



Know What to Do as a Disaster Approaches

Planning and preparations will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. Remember, animals react differently under stress. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines.

You may not be home when a disaster occurs or an evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet-sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

At the first hint of a disaster, act to protect your pet —

- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

Source: “Pets and Disasters: Get Prepared,” The Human Society of the United States and the American Red Cross