



Pet Disaster Preparedness

What can I do to protect my pets BEFORE a disaster?

PREPARATION

A disaster can hit your area with or without notice. That's why it is very important to be prepared in case such an event should occur. The best preparation is a family household disaster plan, and this plan should always include your pets. There are several things a family should do before a disaster approaches to better prepare.

- Check all your supplies and put them in one central location. If you need to leave quickly, you don't want to have to search for supplies. Use this [checklist \(anchor link to Supplies below\)](#) to ensure you are equipped with the necessities.
- Find out if there are any shelters set-up to take pets in an emergency, if your veterinarian offers boarding or if there is an out-of-town friend or relative willing to shelter your pet.
- If you decide to take your pet with you, have a carrier that allows your pet to stand up and turn around inside. Put familiar items such as the pet's normal bedding and favorite toys inside.
- Train your pets to become comfortable with the carrier beforehand by using it as its "room," feeding it in the carrier and placing a favorite toy or blanket inside.
- Keep a list of [pet-friendly hotels](#) and be sure to ask if there are any size restrictions.

SUPPLIES

When assembling emergency supplies for the household, include items for pets to take care of their daily needs, but also keep in mind what will be needed if your pet happens to get separated from you. Whether you are evacuating or sheltering in place, you should have the following supplies on hand to keep your pet comfortable, healthy and safe:

Day-to-Day Items

- 7-10 day supply of food and water
- Food and water bowls
- Cage/carrier labeled with owner information
- Can opener and spoon (for canned food)
- Comfort toys and treats
- Harness/leash and collar
- Litter, litter pan and litter scoop
(litter pan should fit in pet carrier)
- Medications, vaccine record and pet first aid kit
- Muzzle
- Newspaper
- Paper towels
- Sanitizer
- Trash bags
- Towels/blankets/bedding

Pet Identification

Your pet should always wear identification, but it is especially important during disasters. Check tags and make sure the information is current. Does your veterinarian have your current phone number and address? Now is a good time to microchip your pet or check your existing microchip to make any necessary updates.

- Current owner's name, address and phone number tag
- Current pet license
- Current rabies tag
- Microchip

Paperwork

The following should be stored in a water-tight container:

- Emergency contact information sheet with veterinarian contact information
- Medical records
- Proof of current vaccinations
- Feeding and medication instructions
- Photographs of you and your pet

What can I do to protect my pets DURING a disaster?

During a disaster bring your pets inside immediately. Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and may isolate themselves or try to escape, especially if they are afraid. Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm. You may need to separate dogs and cats because even if your pets normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act unreasonably.

If you decide to evacuate during a disaster, plan to take your pets with you. Do not leave your pet at home during a disaster as it can place your animal in great danger and you don't know when you will be able to get back. Keep in mind, not all evacuation facilities will accept animals, so it is best for you to evacuate early with your pet to a previously identified safe location than to wait until it is too late and you have to be evacuated by emergency personnel that may not allow you to bring your animal.

What can I do to protect my pets AFTER a disaster?

Just because a disaster has passed, do not assume that the worst is over. Do not let your pets loose in the house or yard until you have had the chance to examine everything very carefully. It is possible, especially with flooding, that there may be damage to your home which could hurt you or your pet. Carefully walk the yard to verify the fence is intact and there is nothing new and dangerous in the yard, particularly snakes or other dangerous animals which may have come into your yard during flooding.

If your pet was placed in a shelter or boarding facility, contact them as soon as possible to verify your pet is fine and let them know when you will be able to come get it. If your pet is lost during a disaster, check with your area shelters every day since strays only have to be held for 3 days before being considered unclaimed.

Don't be surprised if your pet is more anxious or fearful after a disaster. Familiar scents and landmarks may look different and your pet may become confused and lost. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become defensive and aggressive. It's very important to observe your pets closely after a disaster and give them extra attention, if necessary. If problems persist or become worrisome, contact your veterinarian.

Where can I get more information on protecting my pet during a disaster?

Your veterinarian is always your best source of information. You can also visit the following websites for more information.

www.ready.gov/animals

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846777239-dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/pets_2014.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUbSF_S20bE

<https://youtu.be/BosQtZFv6Jk>