

## **Pets and Disaster Preparedness**

When creating your family's disaster plan and emergency kit, don't forget your pets!

### **Is Your Family Prepared?**

You may face a number of emergencies or disasters in your lifetime — fire, flooding, wind-storm, ice or snowstorm, power outage, or exposure to hazardous materials, to name just a few. Emergency planning is crucial. The steps you take now to prepare your loved ones and your pets could save their lives.

If it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for your pets. Plan for the worst-case scenario. If you think you may only be required to leave for a day, assume that you may not be allowed to return for at least a week. If you think there will only be minor damage or disruption in services, assume that there may be major damage and indefinite loss of local lifelines. Whatever the situation, your pets are not safe left alone.

Don't wait! Start preparing your family and pets for evacuation as soon as you have been warned of possible disaster. When recommendations for evacuation have been announced, follow the instructions of local and state officials. Being prepared in advance will reduce the stress and pressure of being rushed.

### **At-Home Sheltering**

Should a disaster occur or appear imminent, and if emergency officials recommend that you stay in your home, it is crucial that you keep your pets with you. Always bring them inside at the first sign of danger. Keep your Evac-Pack (see below) close at hand. Your pets may become stressed during their in-house confinement, so consider crating them for safety and comfort. Crating your pets may also make it easier if evacuation becomes necessary. Do not evacuate and leave your pets behind in a crate because they will be rendered helpless until you return or until someone else reaches them.

### **Evac-Pack**

Your Evac-Pack should be kept easily accessible and as close to an exit as possible. Be sure it is clearly labeled, easy to carry and water-resistant. Your family and friends should know where your Evac-Pack is kept. Items to consider keeping in or near your Evac-Pack are:

### **Control & Confinement**

On the carrier and harness, write your pet's name, your name and contact information with a permanent marker; include a picture of your pet; Extra harness for safety; Crate, cage or carrier for each pet; Post your pet's behavioral or medical issues on the carrier and harness.

### **Food**

- Seven (7) days worth of pet food in a plastic, airtight container near or in your Evac-Pack
- Rotate food every two months
- Store canned pet food in pull-top cans

- Food that requires refrigeration is not recommended, as it may not be possible to keep it at a safe temperature
- Consider purchasing collapsible water and food dishes at your local pet supply store for easier travel

### **Water**

- Always have drinking water on hand in case of possible loss of water supply
- Store seven (7) days worth of drinking water for each pet (specific amount based on individual pets' needs) in a cool, dark place
- Replace every two months
- Before impending disruption in water service, fill tubs and sinks with potable water

### **Sanitation**

- Roll of paper towels
- Liquid dish soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Household bleach
- A week's worth of litter
- Cage liner and/or bedding for your pet
- Garbage bags (for clean-up)

### **First Aid Kit**

- Ask your veterinarian for recommendations about what to include in your pet's first aid kit
- Prepackaged first aid kits and manuals are available at pet supply stores and through the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

### **Medical Records & Photographs**

Keep a copy of your pet's medical records, feeding and medication requirements, and a recent photo of your family with your pet in a zip-lock bag

### **Additional Supplies**

**Dogs:** long leash, blanket, yard stake, toys, chew toys, newspaper

**Cats:** pillow case or "EvackSack," harness, leash, blanket, toys, small litter pan

### **Other Animals**

**Birds:** Catch net, heavy towel, cuttlebone, blanket or sheet to cover cage, newspaper

**Small animals:** salt lick, water bottle, small hide-box or cardboard tube (for cage)

**Reptiles:** pillowcase or “EvackSack,” warming device (hot water bottle, heating pad), soaking dish

### **Identification**

Cats, dogs and other large pets should wear identification. Collar, tags, microchips and tattoos are forms of identification that will increase the chances of your pet’s safe return home should they become separated from you.

### **Important Tips on Pet Safety**

#### **TIP # 1: Use the Buddy System**

- Talk to your neighbors, friends, relatives and sitters about designating someone as a “buddy” to care for your pets when emergencies occur
- Build an emergency contact list
- Share your evacuation plan, Evac-Pack location, an extra set of keys, and emergency contact list with your “buddy”
- Make sure your “buddy” is comfortable handling your pets
- Plan a specific location where you or someone else would meet your “buddy” with your pets

#### **TIP # 2: Identify Out-of-Area Shelters**

- Ask relatives and/or friends if they would be willing to take you and your pets in should you need to evacuate
- If you have multiple pets, consider making arrangements with several friends
- Look into pet-friendly hotels, veterinary hospitals, boarding kennels and animal shelters outside your area
- Call or visit these facilities to find out if they can accommodate your pets
- Add phone numbers of outside shelters to your emergency contact list

#### **TIP # 3: Get to Know Your Emergency Response Agencies**

- Talk to your local emergency response agencies about family emergency preparedness and planning
- Ask about notification protocols

- Know the phone numbers of your local animal control agency, humane society, local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and local emergency veterinary hospital

**TIP # 4: Post Stickers Outside Your Home**

- Place stickers on your front and back doors that say “Pets Inside”
- Write number of and types of pets in your home on each sticker
- Include phone number where response and rescue agencies would be able to reach you, a relative, or your “buddy”
- Should you evacuate with your pets, if time allows, write “EVACUATED” across the stickers

*Source: New York State Emergency Management Office*

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For additional information, refer to the Disaster Preparedness information on the following websites:

***American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals***

Disaster Preparedness - <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness>

***Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)***

Caring for Animals - <http://www.ready.gov/caring-animals>

***Humane Society of the United States***

Disaster Planning for Pets, Families -  
[http://www.humanesociety.org/news/news/2011/03/disaster\\_planning\\_2011.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/news/2011/03/disaster_planning_2011.html)

***New York State Emergency Management Office***

Keeping Your Pets Safe in an Emergency -  
[http://www.dhses.ny.gov/oem/safety-info/publicsafety/pet\\_safety.cfm](http://www.dhses.ny.gov/oem/safety-info/publicsafety/pet_safety.cfm)