



Guidelines for Emergency Household Pet Care



**Plan ahead
for pets,
too!**

Make arrangements for your pets as part of your household disaster planning. If you must evacuate your home, it's always wise to take your pets with you. Although most states allow trained service dogs in emergency shelters, other pets are not allowed due to public health and safety reasons, so plan ahead for pet security. Advance planning is essential; it could save a pet's life and ease the pet owner's concerns during an emergency.

Is Your Pet Prepared for an Emergency?

- Acquire a pet carrier (portable kennel) or crate for each house pet if the pets will be travelling. These carriers should be large enough for the pet to stand up and turn around in.
- Take time to familiarize the pet with the portable kennel. This can be a difficult experience. Kennel tops and bottoms can be separated to make a pet's bed. This helps them adjust to the kennel.
- Be sure the pet's vaccinations are up to date. This is especially important for pets that will be boarded. Most boarding facilities require proof of current rabies and distemper vaccinations.
- Be sure the pet wears a properly fitted collar with a current license (identification) and rabies tags at all times. Get a leash to have on hand to maintain control of the pet.
- Acquire ample quantities of pet food and kitty litter when purchasing other disaster supplies.
- Acquire plenty of newspaper, plastic bags, cleanser and disinfectants to properly handle pet wastes.

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Where Will Your Pet Stay During the Emergency?

In the event of a disaster, your pet needs a place to stay. Unfortunately, emergency public shelters cannot allow pets for public health and safety reasons, so arrangements for the pet must be made. Make some phone calls to determine the options for pet placement and care if evacuation is necessary. Consider these possibilities:

- Your Home—It may be necessary for your pet to remain at home if you have to leave. Survey your home and determine the best location away from windows to place the pet during an emergency, such as utility room, bathroom, kitchen or other tiled area which can be cleaned easily.
- Kennels—Survey boarding kennels to determine which will take pets during an emergency. Find out who stays on the premises with the animals in the event of a disaster and what provisions would be made if the kennel should have to evacuate from a disaster.
- Veterinarians—Check with veterinary clinics to locate those with boarding facilities.
- Friends—Ask dependable friends or relatives who live further inland, away from the coast or river areas, for shelter during the storm emergency.
- Motels—Call motels to determine if they allow pets and if so, if there are any restrictions on the size and number of pets allowed.

“Do not leave any pet outside or tied up during a storm or flood.”



If Your Pet Stays at Home...

If the pet must be left behind when the home is evacuated during the storm, remember:

- Prepare an area for the pet to use inside the house away from windows, such as a utility room, garage, bathroom or other tiled area which can be easily cleaned.
- Bring the pet indoors well ahead of the disaster.
- Do not leave any pet outside or tied up during a storm or flood.
- Leave only dry-type foods that are relatively unpalatable to prevent overeating. Use sturdy food containers.
- Do not leave any treat-type vitamins or mineral supplements; overeating of these may cause salt poisoning if too much is consumed.
- Birds must eat daily to survive. Use special food dispensers if

- you must leave them behind.
- Water for pets should be left in bathtubs or other sturdy containers that will not spill.
- If animals are on special diets and medications, consult a veterinarian.
- Never leave a cat with a dog, even if the two are normally friendly.
- Confine and keep small pets (birds, hamsters, etc.) away from cats and dogs.
- Provide access to high places, such as counter tops, in case flooding occurs.
- Difficult or dangerous animals should be left in special crates or cages to reduce the possibility of escape.

If Your Pet Goes with You...

If the pet will be taken along during evacuation, prepare the following items:

- License or identification and rabies tags
- Steel or fiberglass crate, properly pet-sized
- Non-spill water and food bowls
- Newspapers and/or paper towels
- Leashes and obedience aids
- Dramamine sickness pills might be needed (i.e., dramamine, a non-prescription drug, 1 mg. per pound given every 12 hours)
- Water in sanitized non-breakable containers
- Dried and packaged semi-moist foods
- Special medications



After Your Pet Returns Home...

Be careful in allowing a pet outdoors after the disaster has passed. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, and a pet could easily be confused and become lost. Downed power lines and reptiles brought in with high water can present real dangers to a pet.