

The Importance of a Disaster Preparedness Plan



By being prepared with a well-thought-out disaster plan for different types of disasters, you can potentially save your pet's life in case of emergency. Some general tips for planning:

Before the Disaster

- Make sure your pet wears at least two forms of current identification. You may want to consider a microchip implant, combined with tags on a collar. Also, keep the information current if you have registered with any lost and found databases.
- Be sure to place permanent, waterproof "Pets Inside" stickers on your front and back windows to alert emergency workers that pets are in your home. If possible, list the number and types of animals in your household. Should you be unable to go home to retrieve your pets during a disaster, this sticker could help rescue workers find your pets in your home.
- Find a vet in your area.
- Start a buddy system with a neighbor. Ask him/her to check on your pet during a disaster if you are not home. Agree to do the same for your neighbor. Exchange information on veterinarians.
- Check to make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date. Keep an extra copy of your pet's health information in your pet disaster/emergency kit.
- Assemble a disaster kit. See recommended pet first aid kit list and pet emergency survival kit.

During the Disaster

- Animals brought to a pet shelter are required to have proper identification collar and rabies tag, proper identification on all belongings, a carrier or cage, a leash, an ample supply of food, water and food bowls, any necessary medications, specific care instructions and news papers or trash bags for clean-up.
- Bring pets indoor well in advance of a storm. Reassure them and remain calm.
- Pet shelters will be filled on first come, first served basis. Call ahead and determine availability.

After The Disaster

- Walk pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home. Often familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and become lost. Also, downed power lines, reptiles brought in with high water, and debris can all pose a threat for animals after a 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 if possible.
- After a disaster animals can become aggressive or defensive—monitor their behavior.

Don't forget your pet when preparing a family disaster plan.



Resources

Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team
<http://sart.cas.psu.edu/>

American Veterinary Medical Association
www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp

Ready.Gov
www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pets_emergency

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/animals.shtm

American Red Cross
First Aid
www.redcross.org/SERVICES/disaster/beprepared/firstaid.html

Preparedness
www.redcross.org/SERVICES/disaster/beprepared/animalsafety.html

The Humane Society of the United States
www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/resources

Pet Emergency Survival Kit

- Dog or cat food, dry or canned—one to two week supply. Can opener, spoon, dish.
- Water—one to two week supply (include water purification tablets). Collapsible bowl that is easy to store.
- Cleaning supplies to clean crate.
- Vaccination records/medical history/picture of your pet & any medical condition(s) (Store in waterproof container).
- Medication, list each pet separately include dosage/frequency; include flea, tick and heartworm preventatives.
- Name of your veterinarian, address, phone number. Include release form authorizing medical treatment for your pet. Include any pet insurance information, policy number, contact (store in waterproof container).
- Pet Information, include copies of registration information, adoption papers, proof of purchase, microchip, tattoo or other identification information (store in waterproof container).
- List of emergency contacts (store in waterproof container).
- Thermal blanket—should be reusable, wind and waterproof. Needs to retain 90% of body heat.
- Emergency light sticks with lanyards.
- Collar & leash.
- Sanitation/poop bags, cat litter, to maintain sanitation in temporary shelter area.



- Toys—for entertainment during a time of great stress.
- Rope—50' of vinyl cord to create runner or tie down. Gives pets freedom to roam while keeping them close.
- Decal—emergency pet alert sticker to put on door/window. Informs rescuers you have pets inside.
- Pet first aid kit.
- Waterproof container to store pet emergency survival kit.
- Dog crate or cat carrier.

Recommended Pet First-Aid Kit

This is for a basic pet first-aid kit. For convenience, you may want to make one for your home and another for your car. It is also suitable for a disaster preparedness kit.

- Activated Charcoal (liquid)
- Antibacterial ointment for wounds & eyes
- Antiseptic cleansing wipes
- Cotton swabs (Q-tips®)
- Current pet first-aid book
- Digital or rectal thermometer in a plastic case
- Eye rinse (sterile)
- Flea and tick prevention and treatment w/clearly labeled instructions)
- First aid adhesive tape, 1" roll
- Kaopectate® or Pepto-Bismol®
- Isopropyl alcohol/alcohol prep pads
- Measuring spoons
- Mineral oil (a lubricant and laxative when given by mouth)
- Leather work gloves (to protect you from being bitten)
- Latex gloves
- Leash

- Plastic freezer/sandwich bags
- Thin rope
- Saline solution (for rinsing wounds)
- Scissors
- Small bottle of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- Splint materials (tongue depressor, 12-inch wooden ruler or thick magazine)
- Sterile gauze pads (3" x 3" and 2" X 2") and gauze bandage rolls (1" and 2")
- Sterile lubricant (waterbased)
- Styptic pencil or cornstarch (stems blood flow from minor cuts)
- Syringe or eyedropper
- Tweezers
- Towel & washcloth
- Tourniquet
- Veterinarian contact information

Place the contents in a plastic storage box, tackle box or coffee can with lid. Pre-made pet first-aid kits are available for purchase at pet supply stores such as PETCO, pharmacies, retail and discount stores and online.

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