

How to Prepare for a Disaster

Don't wait until it's too late. You owe it to your animals to plan ahead!!!

Most of us who hear or read of a disaster think, "This will never happen to me." It's best to be prepared whether disaster strikes or not and the SPCA of Franklin County wants to help you.

If you are forced to evacuate your home, don't leave your pet behind. If it's not safe for you, it's not safe for your pet. Most disaster relief shelters do not admit pets, so you'll need other options. Think ahead. Find out if any motels or hotels in the region accept guests with pets. Make a list of area veterinarians and kennels that might board your pet. Get together with friends or nearby relatives to make reciprocal arrangements for temporary pet housing if your home is unlivable.

If for some reason, you absolutely must leave your dog or cat behind, bring them inside; do not leave a dog tied outside. Put a highly visible sign in the window to notify rescue crews to the presence of pets; leave plenty of water in a large open container; leave food in a dispenser-style bowl (so your pet can't eat it all at once); and do not tie or cage your dog or cat.

Make certain all your pets wear identification tags. Dogs and cats should wear collars with tags; birds can wear leg rings. Another way to identify your pet is with a tattoo or microchip. Many veterinarians, and some humane societies and animal welfare agencies, provide tattooing or microchipping services. Register your pet's number with a tattoo or microchip registration service. Microchipping isn't just for dogs and cats – you can place a microchip in almost any pet you own!

Since your telephone may not work in the wake of a disaster, your pet's ID tag should include a friend or relative's phone number as well as your own. Keep a supply of write-on ID tags, in case you're evacuated. Make sure your pet is wearing a tag with its new address, however temporary.

The following is the Animal Humane Disaster Preparedness checklist for your home and car.

Home: Keep the following in a large plastic box. Tape a checklist to the inside of the lid and note the date items were last rotated. Also note on your calendars when items need to be rotated so you don't forget. Also once you have your kit put together consider being a good neighbor and help a senior citizen or disabled person put one together for their pets!

1. Keep at least one week supply of pet food in an air tight container. Bird seed spoils; replace it every six months
2. Buy pop top cans small enough for one feeding since you may not have a way to refrigerate partially used cans. Rotate food at least once every three months
3. Include a feeding dish; spoon, and a hand crank can opener in case you do not have pop-tops
4. If tap water is not suitable for humans to drink, it is not safe for animals to drink so have at least a (1) one week supply at all times and store it in plastic containers and keep in a cool dark place. Rotate water once every (2) two months
5. Have disposable pooper scooper bags for dogs
6. For cats you'll need a small litter box, a supply of cat litter, and plastic bags for cleaning the litter box
7. Have a small container of dish soap for cleaning and a roll of paper towels
8. Have identification on your pet at all times and keep an extra collar with current Id in your disaster preparedness kit
9. Make sure your current address and phone number are on any and all of your pets' ID tags (Animals that come into shelters during a disaster with I.D. and/or microchip have a greater chance of being reunited with their owners)
10. Keep a harness for both dogs and cats in your kit. A dog can slip out of a collar but not a harness and cats can be walked should they be confined for a long period of time

11. Make sure you have a carrier or collapsible crate to transport your pet or to keep it in while you are displaced; it should be large enough for a litter box, food, and water
12. If your dog or cat is on long-term medications, always have at least a (2) two week supply since you may not be able to refill it in a disaster. Also copies of any prescriptions. If the medicine must be refrigerated, have an ice chest to store it in, in case your electricity goes off. You can usually get ice from a Red Cross shelter
13. Keep copies of each animal's medical records in your kit
14. Keep a first aid book and kit for your pet with your supplies
15. Have several recent close-up photos and a record of your pet's size, weight and special markings. If your pet is lost, you can use this information to prepare posters and flyers. It will also help in identifying you as the owner if your pet is found. Keep these in ziplock bags in case you need to post them in the rain.
16. Keep some toys handy and a blanket for extra warmth.
17. A list of emergency telephone numbers-veterinarians, boarding kennels, shelters and humane societies.
18. A supply of cash to pay for emergency boarding.

CAR:

1. Keep many of the same items in your car that you do in your home, however keep the smaller sizes. Include the following items in your car:
 - Food
 - Water
 - Carrier
 - Leash
 - Litter
 - Water dish AND food dish
 - Medical records
 - Medications
 - Animal ID and photos
2. You should always have at both your home and in your car: cash on hand, a flashlight and a portable radio with plenty of batteries and the locations of nearest shelters.

FIRST AID KIT:

Have in your supplies a basic first aid kit. Remember: NEVER gives cats or dogs ASPIRIN, Tylenol or Ibuprofen – they can KILL! Always ask a vet before giving any of those to your pets. Basic items for pets include:

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| First-aid book for cats and dogs plus ones for any other animals you may have | Absorbent gauze roll (3" x 1 yd.) |
| Antiseptic wipes (1 package) | Instant cold pack |
| Conforming bandage (3" x 5") | Cotton-tipped applicators (1 small box) |
| Emollient cream (1 container) | Latex disposable gloves (several pairs) |
| Absorbent gauze pads (4" x 4") | Properly fitting muzzle for dogs |
| Tweezers and scissors | Triple antibiotic cream |
| Self sticking bandage roll | Digital thermometer |

Also the Red Cross has an excellent emergency kit list for people. You can view and print the list at http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_3_,00.html

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