

Disaster Preparedness

Are you prepared to take care of your pets when a disaster strikes? If not, NOW is the time to stock up on the items that you will need so you will be ready. Don't put off doing what you should do now! It may just make the difference between keeping your pets alive or losing your pet when a disaster strikes.

Shopping List For Pets

Here are the supplies that you should have on hand in a disaster kit for pets. Adjust amounts according to the number of pets you have.

FOOD

1. Stock at least an extra week's supply for disasters at all times
2. Get the brand your pet is used to, and offer it as close to the normal time as possible. Maintaining its normal routine, as best you can, will minimize the stress it may be feeling.
3. If you use canned food, be sure to have a hand-crank can opener, or buy flip-top cans. (Buy cans small enough to be used at one feeding. You may not have a way to properly refrigerate a partially used can of food, and you should not use food that has been left out.)
4. If you use dry food, store it in an airtight, waterproof container. Also have an extra feeding dish and a spoon for scooping/mixing food.
5. Rotate food every three months.
6. If you use canned food, reduce the normal amount by half (supplement with dry food) to reduce the likelihood of your pet getting diarrhea.

WATER

1. Stock at least a week's supply for disasters at all times.
2. Store in plastic containers in a cool, dark place. Rotate it at least every two months.
3. Do not let animals drink flood water. If officials have issued a "boil water" warning, the water from your tap is not safe for you or your animals. If you are drinking bottled or purified water during a disaster, that is what your pet should be drinking.

SANITATION

Cats

1. Have an extra small litter box and litter scoop in your supplies, plus a week's supply of cat litter and small plastic bags for disposing of waste.

Dogs

1. Have a pooper scooper and plastic bags for disposing of waste. You may want to purchase some disposable pooper scooper bags at a pet supply store.

CLEANING SUPPLIES

1. Have a small container of dish soap and disinfectant, plus at least 4 rolls of paper towels.

COLLARS AND IDENTIFICATION TAGS

Cats- A breakaway collar is recommended. It is designed to slip over a cat's head should it get caught on something.

Dogs- Do not keep a choke collar on your dog all the time, as it might accidentally get caught on something and cause the dog to choke itself.

1. Have a properly fitting collar and tag on your pet at all times, and have an extra collar in your supplies.
2. The collar and/or tag should include your name, home phone number, and address.
3. Also have a spare temporary tag in your supplies that you can write on, in case you will be living somewhere else temporarily. This tag should include your name and temporary address and phone number. (In addition to a collar and tag, you may also wish to consider micro chips and tattoos as permanent forms of ID.)
4. Addresses are important. Remember, the phones may not be working during a disaster and its aftermath.

CARRIER FOR CAT EVACUATION

In the event you must evacuate, have a cat carrier assembled and ready to go, with a shoe-box size litter box and food and water dishes that fit in the carrier. (An "Evacsak" is an alternative to a carrier. It is similar to a pillow case, but is a much more safe and secure way to transport a small animal. Evacsacs take up a lot less room than carriers, and if you have several cats, you can get a lot more of them into a car. To purchase these, contact Animal Care Equipment and Services at 1-800-338-ACES.)

CAGE/CRATE

CATS

1. Have a collapsible wire cage to house your cat if it needs to be evacuated and/or confined during a disaster. (Remember, exterior walls can fall down and windows can break, so you need a way to keep your cat safely confined).
2. Be sure the cage is large enough to give the cat room to spread out, with extra space for a food and water dish, plus a litter box.
3. If your cat plays with toys, include some to help keep it entertained.

DOGS

1. Have a collapsible wire crate or plastic airline crate on hand to transport your dog if you need to evacuate, and/or to house it during a disaster. (Remember, exterior walls can fall down and windows can break, so you need a way to keep your dog safely confined.)
2. Be sure the crate is large enough for your dog to lie down comfortably, with extra space for a food and water dish.
3. You may also wish to include a chew toy to help keep it entertained if it needs to be confined for a long time

HARNESS AND LEASH

Cats

1. Have a properly fitting harness and leash in your supplies so that if your cat must be confined in a cage for an extended period of time, you can take it out for exercise.

Dogs

1. Have a properly fitting harness and at least a 6-foot leash in your supplies for walking your dog. Disasters are stressful for dogs, and a frightened dog can slip out of a collar, but not a harness.

STAKE-OUT CHAIN FOR DOGS

1. Have a stake-out chain for each dog in your household. Walls and fences may come down during a disaster, and you may need to keep your dog confined on a chain until repairs can be made.
2. If you don't have something to attach the chain to, get a stake that screws into the ground. Be sure it is secure for the size dog you have. Pet supply stores sell a variety of sizes.
3. Be sure to use a chain and not a leash that the dog can chew through.
4. Be sure the chain is long enough to let the dog move around, but not so long that it might get tangled around something and cause the dog to choke itself.
5. Be sure there is shelter from the elements within the dog's reach.
6. Do not chain the dog in a place where it could fall off of something (like an elevated porch) and hang itself.

VETERINARY CARE

1. Keep your pet's vaccinations current, for protection in case it needs to be housed with other animals during a disaster. Keep a copy of its medical records, including vaccinations, with your disaster supplies.
2. Before a disaster strikes, check to see whether your veterinarian has a disaster plan. If not, find one who does. You need to know where to take your pet if it needs medical care during a disaster.
3. Knowing in advance where to take a critically injured animal may save its life.

MEDICATIONS

1. If your pet is on long-term medication, always have on hand at least a week's supply. (Your vet may not be able to fill a prescription for a while.)
2. 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.

FIRST AID KIT

Have in your supplies a basic first aid kit.

Basic items for pets include:

First-aid book for cats

Antiseptic wipes (1 package)

Conforming bandage (3" x 5")

Emollient cream (1 container)

Absorbent gauze pads (4" x 4")

Tweezers and scissors

Absorbent gauze roll (3" x 1 yd.)

Instant cold pack

Cotton-tipped applicators (1 small box)

Latex disposable gloves (several pairs)

Properly fitting muzzle for dogs

PHOTOS

1. Place photos in resealable plastic bags in case you need to post them in the rain.
2. Include yourself in some photos as proof of ownership.
3. Keep all the photos with the important insurance papers that you would take with you if you had to evacuate.

COMFORTING YOUR PET

Remember to comfort your pet during a disaster. It is as frightened as you are, and having you near to give it a hug will help keep it calm. (It will probably help you too.) If your pet is not ready to be comforted, do not force it! Let it come to you when it is ready.

IF YOUR PET IS LOST DURING A DISASTER

Know where animal shelters or animal rescue organizations are located in your area. You may need to visit them to look for your dog. It is important to look for your dog as soon as you realize it is gone, as some shelters may not be able to house large numbers of displaced animals for a very long time. Take your photos.