

Family Pet Disaster Plan

Disaster planning is a “what if” game – what if you were at work, away from home shopping, etc and your pets were at home with no one else there? What if a sudden disaster occurred in the middle of the night? Would you be able to fully accomplish everything you needed to and evacuate? Your plans should be based on this kind of advance thinking.

Most important: In an emergency, the best and safest place for your pets is with you. If it's not safe for you to stay in your home, it's not safe for your pets, either. **Bring them with you!**

There are actions you can take before, during and after a disaster strikes!

Questions to ask before:

- Anticipate how your pets would be cared for while you're away from your home.
- Will you need assistance evacuating with your pets? Will you need to provide assistance to neighbors or friends?
- Is there a neighbor or local friend who can look after and/or evacuate with your pets if you are unable to? Have you made these arrangements with them?
- How would your pets react during an emergency? Have you trained them to be handled easily?
- Assess what would need doing and who would be available to do it.
- Do you know what animal welfare agencies are in your community, and where they are located? Have you spoken to them about how they can help in a major emergency?
- Find out what hotels in your area may be “pet friendly”. Many may alter their policy during disasters. Do you have friends or family that will care for your pets while you are out of your home?
- How will you provide identification information or prove ownership? Do you have recent color photographs and descriptions? Is your pet microchipped and is the number registered to you?
- Does your out-of-state contact person from your family's disaster plan also have information about your pets? Is that person's phone number on the pet's tags as well as their crates/other containers?
- Do you have a window sign near your front door that identifies what pets are in the house to emergency responders?
- Is your pet record form and authorizations to treat your pets securely attached to their crate or other carrier?
- Are your pets comfortable using their crate? Have you done their crate training? If a dog, are they used to wearing a muzzle?
- Have you decided on and built a supplies kit for your pets?
- Have you practiced your plan with family discussions and drills? You need to know how long it will take you to get everything ready for evacuation and what can go wrong!

If you are warned an emergency may occur:

- Check your supplies, and replenish any that need replacing (perishables, batteries).
- Make sure that all medications and pet record forms are up to date
- Locate pets and keep them secure, in case you will need to evacuate.
- Notify your contacts that an emergency is imminent.
- Check pets are wearing ID tags and collars.
- Discuss possible events and actions with your family.

When an emergency strikes:

- Crate/contain your pets and put in vehicle
- Put all supplies (including your battery-operated radio) in your vehicle
- Post your window sign, if it's not already up.
- Evacuate together
- Notify your contacts
- Listen to your local a.m. radio news

Tips:

- Store supplies in containers that are easily carried or wheeled.