

## DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN FOR PET OWNERS

A plan is a necessary step in preparing for a disaster. It allows evacuation or other steps to be taken quickly and effectively, preventing damage and/or injury of both humans and animals. Some things to consider when making your plan and prevention:

- Be sure your pets wear collars and tags with up to date contact information or other identification
- Consider microchipping your pets – This is one of the best ways to ensure your pet is returned to you if lost. Remember to keep your contact information up-to-date with the microchip company.
- Purchase a pet carrier for each of your pets – Include your name, contact information, and pet's name on each carrier and be sure to familiarize yourself and your pet with the cage regularly. Additionally, keep the carrier easily accessible.
- Know where you can go in the event of an evacuation – Make plans with friends or family outside the evacuation area, or research pet-friendly evacuation sites that would work for you. Be sure you know how to get to these destinations.
- Make sure to have a pet evacuation kit readily available!



## PET EVACUATION KIT FOR PET OWNERS

A pet evacuation kit is a key step in your planning. It should be in a storage tub, or other container that is easy to grab and take with you in case of an emergency. Some things to consider including in your kit may include:

- An extra leash, collar, and/or harness (also be sure your pet has their collar and tags before leaving)
- A pet carrier with blankets/bedding and toys
- Food (in an airtight container) and water to last at least 2 weeks per pet – rotate the food and water every 3 months to keep it fresh
- Food and water bowls
- Plastic bags for dog poop or a litter box and litter for cats
- Medications for at least 2 weeks
- Important documents in a watertight bag
  - A copy of vet records (rabies certificate, vaccinations, prescriptions, etc)
  - Registration information
  - Recent photos of your pets in case they get lost
  - Emergency contact information
  - Instructions for your pet's routine (feeding schedule, medications, any known allergies, etc)
- A pet first aid kit



## GENERAL DISASTER GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY

What can I do to protect my pets before a disaster?

A disaster can strike with little to no notice, making it very important for your family to be prepared in case such an event should occur. The best way to prepare is through a disaster plan, which should always include your pets. To prepare, have an appropriately sized carrier that allows your pet to stand up, turn around, and lay down comfortably inside. Familiarize your pet with the crate beforehand so they are comfortable with it in a disaster situation. Pets can be trained to be comfortable with their carrier by using it as a “room”. Feed your pet in the carrier, place its favorite toy or blanket inside, and make it a safe space for them. When assembling emergency supplies for your household, include a pet evacuation kit (detailed in the above section), such as extra food, kitty litter, and medication. In addition, you should contact your veterinarian, local animal shelter, humane society, or emergency management office for more information on caring for pets in an emergency; however, this fact sheet is a beneficial start to making your plan. find out where several shelters will be set up in the area around you that will allow animals, keeping in mind that they usually fill very quickly and it is important to use these only as an emergency backup plan. Try to keep your pet with you in an emergency shelter, as it will help reduce your pet’s anxiety and you will always know where they are in the event that the situation escalates. However, if it is not possible to stay in a facility that accommodates pets, consider checking with your veterinarian to see if you can board your pet at their facility or if there is someone s/he can recommend.

What can I do to protect my pets during a disaster?

In the event of a disaster, bring your pets indoors immediately. Animals have instincts about severe weather changes, which may cause them to isolate themselves or attempt to escape, particularly if they are afraid. If your pet was exposed to floodwaters, wash them immediately to get the chemicals and other debris off their skin. Consider separating your animals, especially dogs and cats, because even pets that normally get along can act unreasonably in the anxiety of the situation. If evacuation is necessary, NEVER leave

your pet behind at home. Since you have no idea what will happen at home or when you will be able to get back, always plan to take your pet with you. Remember your pets' medical records, medicines, and evacuation kit. If evacuating with a bird, be sure to bring a cage and a thin cloth in addition to other necessary supplies, to help alleviate some of the anxiety for the animal. Keep in mind that not all evacuation facilities will accept animals, so the sooner you evacuate to a predetermined safe location, the more likely you will be able to get a spot in an animal-friendly shelter.

What can I do to protect my pets after a disaster?

Even after a disaster has passed, do not assume the worst is over or that everything is safe again.

Be sure to examine your house and yard thoroughly before letting your pets loose. It is highly probable, especially with a disaster such as flooding, that there may be damage to your home, which may become a danger to you or your pet. As soon as possible, carefully walk the yard, verifying the fence is intact and there is no new or dangerous things in the yard (including snakes and other dangerous animals). In addition, be sure to check over your pet, looking for scrapes, bleeding or bruised areas, and/or other injuries.

If your pet was placed into a shelter or boarding facility during the disaster, contact them as soon as possible to check on your pet and provide a date you will be able to pick them up. If your pet is lost during a disaster, be sure to check with all of your local shelters daily.

A disaster is an extremely strenuous situation for both you and your pet. Do not be surprised if your pet becomes more anxious or fearful afterward. Even familiar scents and landmarks may look different, causing your pet to become confused and lost. Normally quiet and friendly pets may even become defensive and angry. Observe your pets closely after a disaster, giving them extra attention if necessary. Be their point of stability and comfort – remember, they don't understand everything that just happened to them. Give them time to recover, but if it seems they are having an abnormally hard time with returning to their normal self, contact your local veterinarian.