

# **Pet Emergency Plan**

## *Make a Pet Emergency Plan*

- ID your pet. Make sure your pet's tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Also consider microchipping your pets.
- Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make a pet emergency kit. [Download Preparing Makes Sense for Pet Owners](#) for a full list of items to include in your pets kit.

Check out this quick list:

- Pet food
  - Bottled water
  - Medications
  - Veterinary records
  - Cat litter/pan
  - Manual can opener
  - Food dishes
  - First aid kit and other supplies
- Identify shelters. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. [Find out which motels and hotels in the area you plan to evacuate to allow pets well in advance of needing them.](#) There are also a number of guides that list hotels/motels that permit pets and could serve as a starting point. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers.
  - Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.

## *Prepare Shelter for Your Pet*

- Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office to get advice and information.
- If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close.
- Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current. Include copies in your "pet survival" kit along with a photo of your pet.
- Some animal shelters will provide temporary foster care for owned pets in times of disaster but this should be considered only as a last resort.

- If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger! Confine your pet to a safe area inside - **NEVER** leave your pet chained outside! Leave them loose inside your home with food and plenty of water. Remove the toilet tank lid, raise the seat and brace the bathroom door open so they can drink. Place a notice outside in a visible area, advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.

## *Protect Your Pet During a Disaster*

- Bring your pets inside immediately.
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed animals moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink.
- Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.
- Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.
- In an emergency, you may have to take your birds with you. Talk with your veterinarian or local pet store about special food dispensers that regulate the amount of food a bird is given. Make sure that the bird is caged and the cage is covered by a thin cloth or sheet to provide security and filtered light.
- If you evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their own and if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.
- If you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area who would be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.
- Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer.

## *Caring for Your Pet After a Disaster*

- If you leave town after a disaster, take your pets with you. Pets are unlikely to survive on their own.
- In the first few days after the disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost. Also, snakes and other dangerous animals may be brought into the area with flood areas. Downed power lines are a hazard.

- The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.

### *Tips for Large Animals*

If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster.

- Ensure all animals have some form of identification.
- Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
- Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers. Note: It is best to allow animals a chance to become accustomed to vehicular travel so they are less frightened and easier to move.
- Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care and handling equipment.
- If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or turn them outside.

### *Cold Weather Guidelines for Large Animals*

When temperatures plunge below zero, owners of large animals and livestock producers need to give extra attention to their animals. Prevention is the key to dealing with hypothermia, frostbite and other cold weather injuries in livestock.

Make sure your livestock has the following to help prevent cold-weather problems:

- Shelter
- Plenty of dry bedding to insulate vulnerable udders, genitals and legs from the frozen ground and frigid winds
- Windbreaks to keep animals safe from frigid conditions
- Plenty of food and water

Take extra time to observe livestock, looking for early signs of disease and injury. Severe cold-weather injuries or death primarily occur in the very young or in animals that are already debilitated. Cases of weather-related sudden death in calves often result when cattle are suffering from undetected infection, particularly pneumonia. Sudden, unexplained livestock deaths and illnesses should be investigated quickly so that a cause can be identified and steps can be taken to protect the remaining animals.

Animals suffering from frostbite don't exhibit pain. It may be up to two weeks before the injury becomes evident as the damaged tissue starts to slough away. At that point, the injury should be treated as an open wound and a veterinarian should be consulted.