

## DISASTER PREPARATION FOR YOUR PETS

The raging wildfires near Los Angeles and the mass evacuations serve as stark reminders that we all should make preparations in case of an emergency. Whether you live in a location at risk for wildfires, hurricane country, earthquake zones, flood zones, or tornado alley; emergency preparations should always include your pet! Prepare your pet(s) for emergencies!

In addition to your emergency kit for the humans in your household,

### **Create an emergency supply kit for your pet(s)**

- Food - Keep a minimum of 3 days of food in an airtight, waterproof container for each pet.
- Water - Store a minimum of 3 days water for each pet.
- Pet food and water dishes
- Flashlight
- Medicines and medical records - Keep an extra supply of medicines that your pet takes in a waterproof container. Place a copy of your pet's vaccination documents, registration information, microchip information, and medical records in a plastic bag or waterproof container.
- Pet First aid kit - This kit should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors, antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol, saline solution, and a pet first aid reference book. If your pet has any medical conditions, consult with your veterinarian to determine any other items your pet(s) may need.
- Collar with ID tag, harness, and leash - Include a backup leash, collar or harness. The ASPCA recommends a harness for safety and security)
- Crate or other pet carrier - Take your pets with you! Having a ready crate or pet carrier will aid you in transporting your pet under emergency circumstances.
- Sanitation - Include pet litter and litter boxes if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, and liquid bleach, liquid dish soap.
- Familiar items - Put favorite toys, treats, bedding in the kit. Familiar items are comforting to pets in unfamiliar surroundings.
- A picture of you and your pet together - If the worst happens and you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a photo will help document your ownership. Don't forget, if you lose or find a pet during an emergency or anytime, search for them and post them on [PETS 911](#).

## **CREATE A PLAN FOR EVACUATION**

If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for your pets. Learn the lessons that came from Hurricane Katrina. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Local and state health and safety regulations do not permit the Red Cross to allow pets in disaster shelters unless they are service animals that assist people. According to the Red Cross it may be difficult if not impossible to find shelter for your animals in the midst of an evacuation, so plan ahead for both your family and your pets.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your local area to check their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with your pet emergency kit. If you are alerted to an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends or relatives outside your local area whether they could shelter your animal(s) in the case of an emergency. Create a buddy system and do the same for them.
- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Contact local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets during a disaster. Animal shelters may be overwhelmed caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort. To locate a list of area shelters and rescues go to [PETS 911 Local Shelters/Rescues](#).
- Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of an impending storm or disaster so that they do not wander off or become disoriented.
- Should disaster strike when you are not home, make arrangements for a trusted neighbor to take your pets and meet up with you at a predetermined location. Be sure the person has a key to your home, knows where your Emergency Pet Kit is, and is comfortable with your pets and your pets are familiar with him/her.

There are times when emergency officials recommend that people stay in their homes. It is crucial that you keep your pets inside with you. It is not unusual for pets to become stressed during emergency situations so confining them to their crates may comfort them. Be sure to keep your Emergency Pet Kit close at hand should officials call for a last minute evacuation.

The ASPCA also has helpful information on their website <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/> about disaster preparedness for exotic pets including birds, reptiles, and pocket pets.

### **Sources:**

American Red Cross - Preparing and Getting Trained <http://www.redcross.org/>  
US Department of Homeland Security <http://www.ready.gov/>  
ASPCA - <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/>