

BE PREPARED WITH A DISASTER PLAN

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. But whether the disaster is an ice storm, a hazardous spill, a flood, a fire, or even an act of bioterrorism, you may have to evacuate your home.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.



HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO TAKE YOUR PETS

Because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations, only service animals who assist people with disabilities will be allowed inside human evacuation shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. Call ahead for reservations.

Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals, and be prepared to house them separately, if necessary. Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.

ASSEMBLE A PORTABLE PET DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:



- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or labeled carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food (replaced every 2 months), potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, can opener, paper towels, and spray disinfectant to clean animal waste.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.

- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a pre-arranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a petsitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed.

Transport cats in cat carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines.



Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

IF YOUR PET IS LOST

If your pet becomes lost during or after a disaster, remain calm and assess the situation. Pay daily visits to local shelters, animal control facilities, veterinary offices, and kennels. You can also post photos of your lost pet.

If your pet is in need of rescue, never put yourself or others at risk. Do not attempt to rescue your pet if your life or health or that of others may be placed in danger. Contact your local emergency management authority, veterinarian or animal shelter for assistance.

CARING FOR BIRDS IN AN EMERGENCY

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruit and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

ABOUT OTHER PETS

Reptiles

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site. If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad. When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

Pocket Pets

Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This information is provided by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) New England Regional Office. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Animal Health Division is currently developing an animal disaster response plan for Vermont. For further information on animal disaster planning, contact: **The Humane Society of the United States** www.hsus.org/disaster or call (802) 368-2790, email nero@hsus.org. **Vermont Agency of Agriculture Animal Health Division** www.vermontagriculture.com or call (802) 828-2421). **Vermont Veterinary Medical Association** www.vtvets.org, or call (802) 425-3495, email info@vtvets.org. **American Veterinary Medical Association** www.avma.org.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Have your emergency contact information in one easily accessible place. By filling in the information below, you will be prepared to reach the key animal disaster resources in your community.

Local Emergency Planning Commission

Vermont Emergency Management Agency

(802) 244-8721 or 1-800-347-0488

Local Animal Shelter

Veterinarian

VVMA

(802) 425-3495

Agency of Ag Animal Health Division

(802) 828-2421

HSUS

(802) 368-2790



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