

PETS IN DISASTERS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TOPIC

The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, tornado or earthquake is directly related to your level of emergency planning.

Whether you decide to stay in place in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what is best for you is also typically best for your animals.



IDENTIFY AND VACCINATE YOUR PET

- Make sure your cat or dog is wearing a collar and identification that is up to date and visible at all times.
- Have your cell phone number on your pet's tag.
- Consider microchipping your dog or cat.
- Make sure all vaccinations are current.



CREATE A DISASTER KIT

- Food and water for at least five days for each pet.
- Bowls and a manual can opener if packing canned pet food.
- Medications and medical records stored in a waterproof container
- A first-aid kit with a pet first-aid book.
- Animal waste disposal: cat litter box, litter, litter scoop, bedding (for small animals), and garbage bags to collect waste.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers/kennels to transport pets safely.
- Current photos of you with your pets (good quality) and descriptions of your pets (including weight) in case you become separated. One should be with you and one on the kennel.
- Kennel should be labeled on the outside with photo, their name, your name, and contact info.
- Written information about your pets' feeding schedules, medical conditions and behavior issues along with the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets or place them in foster care.
- Download a checklist at www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/disaster/disaster_kit_checklist.pdf

PLAN AHEAD

- Find a safe place to stay ahead of time.
- Call your local Office of Emergency Management to see if you will be allowed to evacuate with your pets and that there will be shelters that take people and their pets in your area.
- To be safe, find a pet-friendly safe place for your family and pets.
- In case you won't be home – make plans in advance with a neighbor or close friend to take your pets and meet at a predetermined destination.

IF YOU EVACUATE

- If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for your pet. Take your pets if you leave.
- Evacuate early: do not wait for a mandatory evacuation order. You may be required to leave your pet behind if you wait to be evacuated by emergency officials.
- Evacuating before conditions become dangerous or stressful will help keep your pet calm and easily loaded into a carrier.

IF YOU STAY HOME

- If you must stay home to wait out a storm or disaster, find a safe area in your house where you can all stay together. Make it pet friendly.
- Close off unsafe nooks and crannies where frightened pets may try to hide.
- Move dangerous items such as tools or toxic products from the area.
- Bring pets indoors as soon as local authorities say trouble is on the way.
- Keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers. Make sure they are wearing identification.
- If you have a room you can designate as a “safe room,” put emergency supplies in that room in advance.

AFTER THE DISASTER

- Your home may be a very different place after the emergency is over, and it may be hard for your pets to adjust.
- Do not allow pets to roam loose. Familiar landmarks could have changed and your pet may get lost.
- While you assess home damage, keep dogs on leash and cats in carriers so they don't escape if the house is damaged.
- Keep pets away from disaster sites. Paws, feet, noses, and airways could be damaged from the dust, hazardous materials, and debris common to post-disaster sites.
- Do not let your pet eat or drink something unless you are confident about the food or water's safety.
- Be patient with pets after a disaster. Help them get into their normal routine.
- Be alert for wild animals that may have sought refuge in your house or yard.

MORE INFORMATION

[Humanesociety.org](https://www.humanesociety.org) - Make a Disaster Plan for Your Pets

[Humanesociety.org](https://www.humanesociety.org) - Pet Disaster-Preparedness Kit

[Redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) - Prepare your Home and Family: Pets

[FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) - Taking Care of Pets During a Disaster or Emergency

[Fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov) - Preparing for Your Pet Makes Sense. Prepare Now. (pdf)

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