



# Pets and Disasters: *Get Prepared*



**American  
Red Cross**

Greater Cleveland Chapter



## Pet Safety in Brief

- Have a safe place to take your pet**
- Assemble a pet disaster kit**
- Know what to do as a disaster approaches**

Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. Here's how you can be prepared to protect your pets when disaster strikes.



## **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.

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 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.

### **Step 1: Have a Safe Place to Take Your Pets**

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your 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. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have, so this should be your last resort.

## Step 2: Assemble a Pet Disaster Supplies Kit

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

- 🐾 Medications and medical records stored in a water proof container. Sturdy leashes, harnesses, or carriers to transport your pet safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- 🐾 Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- 🐾 Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter and can opener.
- 🐾 Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and then name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- 🐾 Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

## Step 3: Know What To Do As A Disaster Approaches

Often, warnings are issues hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pets. 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 pets have appropriate tags and collars are securely fastened with up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area.

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 prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supply kit is kept, and have a key to your home.

Planning and preparations will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. 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 veterinarians if any behavior problems persist.

## Other Important Information

### 🐾 Create a pet first aid kit

Basic Supplies to include are gauze pads, gauze roll/ bandages, roll of cloth, thermometer, tweezers, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment, cotton swabs, instant cold pack, rags/ rubber tubing for tourniquet, First Aid book

### 🐾 Handling an injured animal

Any animal injured or in pain can



bite or scratch you. Even the friendliest of pets must be handled with care for the safety, of all involved. If you are accidentally bitten or scratched, seek medical attention. Both dog and cat bites can become infected quickly!

### 🐾 Food and water requirements

Water is ALWAYS given free choice to all animals. Animals (except birds), like people, can go extended periods of time without food, but can only last a couple of days at the most without water. The values, below, are approximate per adult animal per day and may vary greatly with temperature, workload, stress and disease. Sources of feed should be identified before a disaster.

## A Final Word

If you must evacuate, do not leave your animals behind. If there is a possibility that disaster may strike while you are out of the house, there are precautions you can take to increase your pets' chances of survival, but they are not a substitute for evacuating with your pets.

*For more information, contact:*

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