

# Caring for Animals Before, During, and After a Disaster

Planning ahead of time, will greatly increase the likelihood your animals survive a disaster such as a fire or flood, tornado or terrorist attack. A few things you can do to prepare for an emergency is creating an emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system.

If you choose to evacuate your home, **NEVER LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Likely, your pets will not be able to survive on their own and if by some chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

If you are going to a public shelter, be aware many times pets are not allowed. Consider shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets; such as staying with friends or family that live outside of your immediate area who you can stay with temporarily.

Develop a “pet care buddy system” with others to be sure that someone is available to provide care for or evacuate your pets if you are not able.

## Plan for pet needs during a disaster:

- For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Search out motels and hotels in advance that allow pets. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers. They may be able to provide additional resources for caring for your pets during a disaster.
- Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, manual can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they're not available later. Packing a pet survival kit before you find yourself in an emergency situation will make things less stressful.
- Make sure up-to-date identification tags are on your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site.
- Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet.

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## Protect Your Pet during a Disaster

- Bring your pets inside immediately.
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes.
- Feeding the pet moist or canned food will lessen the amount of water they will need to drink.
- Animal's instincts about severe weather changes often lead them to isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. Never tie them up outside during a storm.
- Even if you dogs and cats usually get along, separate dogs and cats. The anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally.

## Caring for Your Pet after a Disaster

- For several days after the disaster, keep your pets leashed when they go outside. Stay close to your pet since snakes and other dangerous animals may be brought into the area after a flood. Downed power lines are a hazard.
- The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. A quiet and friendly pet may become aggressive and/or defensive.

### Resources:

<https://ready.gov/caring-animals>

[https://www.asPCA.org/sites/default/files/preparedness\\_for\\_pets\\_sep\\_2015.pdf](https://www.asPCA.org/sites/default/files/preparedness_for_pets_sep_2015.pdf)

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