

Disasters — Are You Prepared?

The following material is an excerpt from the AVMA booklet *Saving the Whole Family*.[©]

Countless times people have been told to leave their homes for a "short time", only to find that they cannot return for days or weeks. Even disasters like gas leaks and minor flooding can keep you from tending to your animals for extended periods of time. To prevent situations such as these, prepare ahead of time and **TAKE YOUR ANIMALS WITH YOU**. It is best to be overly cautious during a disaster warning. Preparing ahead of time and acting quickly are the best ways to keep you and your family, including your animals, out of danger. **Your animals depend on you to be prepared in the event of a disaster situation.**

- Setup an appointment to talk to your veterinarian about planning for your animals during disasters.
- Assemble an animal evacuation kit and first aid kit.
- Develop an evacuation plan for all of your animals.
- Prearrange an evacuation site(s) for your family and your animals.
- Keep written directions to your home with you and in your evacuation kit. This will help you tell emergency responders how to get to your home if you are in a state of panic and in need of rescue or if a person unfamiliar with your area is the only person in your home during a disaster.
- Keep all vehicles well maintained and full of gas.
- Keep emergency cash on hand.
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In Case You Are Not At Home

Preplace stickers on front and back house doors, barn doors, and pasture entrances to notify neighbors, fire fighters, police, and other rescue personnel that animals are on your property and where to find your evacuation supplies. Provide a list in your evacuation kit of the number, type, and location of your animals, noting favorite hiding spots, in order to save precious rescue time.

To facilitate a successful rescue, provide muzzles, handling gloves, catch nets, and animal restraints where rescue personnel can find them. Keep in mind that animals may become fractious when frightened. Designate a willing neighbor to tend to your animals in the event that a disaster occurs when you are not at home. This person should have a key to your home, be familiar with your animals, know your evacuation procedures, and know where your evacuation supplies are kept. It is suggested that you sign a letter that releases your neighbor from responsibility should one of your animals become injured and sign a veterinary medical treatment authorization form.

Identification

Having identification on your animals including rabies and license tags, if applicable, will help reunite you and your animal(s) in the event that you are separated. Identification should provide your name, home address and phone number.

Transportation/Housing

The most important step in ensuring the safety of your animals during disasters is making sure that you have adequate transportation methods and equipment and a prearranged evacuation site for all of your animals.

List of Important Emergency Contacts

Include addresses and 24-hour contact numbers, if available. These contacts can be used by rescue personnel responding to a disaster affecting your animals or by you during a disaster or an evacuation. Keep one copy with you and one copy in your animal evacuation kit.

Numbers where you may be reached (pager, cell phone, work phone).

Your prearranged evacuation site.

Local contact person in case of emergency when you are not available.

Out-of-state contact person in case the disaster is far reaching in your locale.

Your veterinarian and boarding facility and alternatives up to 90 miles away

Hotels that allow pets (90 mile radius)

Animal Control, Police, Fire, and Public Health Departments, Animal Shelter & Red Cross Chapter

Evacuation Essentials

An animal evacuation kit and a first aid kit will help you to care for your animal(s) in the event of a disaster. The evacuation kit should be assembled in an easy-to-carry, waterproof container. It should be stored in an easily accessible location away from areas with temperature extremes. Replace the food, water, and medications as often as needed to maintain their quality and freshness and in accordance with the expiration dates. Indicate, if needed, medications that are stored elsewhere due to temperature requirements such as refrigeration.

Veterinary Records/Medical History

Make photocopies of important veterinary documents to store in your animal evacuation kit.

I. Vaccination records

- Vaccination type and date
- Rabies certificate, if applicable

II. Medical history

- Important test results (Felv/FIV, Heartworm, Coggins, TB, other infectious diseases)
- Medical conditions

Proof of Ownership

Make copies of registration information, adoption papers, proof of purchase, and microchip information to store in the evacuation kit. List each one of your animals and their species/breed, age, sex, color, and distinguishing characteristics. Keep current photographs of your animals in the evacuation kit for identification purposes. Include yourself in some of the photos to help you reclaim your lost animal(s). Consider preparing laminated "Lost Pet" signs with your animal's photo attached, your name, and your contact information to use in case your animal is lost.

ESSENTIAL EVACUATION KIT SUPPLIES

- Batteries (flashlight, radio)
- Can opener
- Cleaning supplies
- First aid kit (see below)
- Leashes, collars, harnesses
- Newspaper
- Radio (battery or crank operated)
- Familiar items to make pets feel comfortable (favorite toys, treats, and blankets)
- 2-week supply of food (dry & canned, rotate based on expiration dates)
- 2-week supply of water in plastic gallon jugs (replace as needed)
- Cage/carrier (for each animal)
- Gloves to decrease the chance of being bitten or scratched
- Muzzles, catch-net
- Flashlight
- Maps of local area and intended evacuation area
- Non-spill food and water dishes
- Spoon (canned food)

SMALL ANIMAL FIRST AID KIT (Rotate medical supplies based on expiration dates.)

- Alcohol prep pads
- Antibiotic ointment (for wounds)
- Bandage (blunt end) scissors
- Cotton/gauze bandage rolls
- Rectal thermometer
- Flea and tick prevention and treatment
- Ice cream sticks (which may be used as splints)
- Measuring spoons
- Non-adherent bandage/gauze pads
- Sterile lubricant (water-based)
- Styptic powder or pencil (clotting agent)
- Triangular bandage
- Activated charcoal tablets
- Anti-diarrheal liquid or tablets (consult a veterinarian prior to administration)
- Single-use CPR Shield
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cotton-tipped swabs
- Plastic or metal tweezers
- Elastic bandage rolls
- Hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting in dogs (NOT cats)*
- Latex gloves
- Medications (provide detailed instructions)
- Sterile saline solution (for rinsing eyes and wounds)
- Vetrap/Coban/Co-flex stretch bandage wrap
- Syringe or eye dropper
- Towel and wash cloth
- Liquid dish detergent (mild wound and body cleanser)

* 0.5 – 1 ml per pound weight. If your dog weighs 50 pounds, you can give 25 – 50 mls of non-expired hydrogen peroxide orally, **once**. 15 mls = 1 tablespoon (or 5 mls = 1 teaspoon), so this would be approximately 1.5 – 3.5 TBSP for a 50-pound dog.

DO NOT induce vomiting unless instructed to do so and DO NOT use Syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting due to harsh side effects.