

Are you “Petpared” for Disasters?

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Saturday Feb. 20 is National Love Your Pet Day. Show your pets you love them by having them prepared for the next disaster.

Pets are an important part of our society, and for many an extension of their household and members of the family. Ensuring that your pet is also prepared for a disaster is one vital step in your disaster preparedness. Listed below is how you can prepare your pet for the next disaster or emergency.

Make a plan:

By having a plan in place for you and your pets, you will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry when you need to make decisions during an emergency.

Things to include in your pet plan:

- Plan with neighbors, friends, or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.
- Arrange a safe room at home for your pets that is clear of hazards such as tools, debris or toxic products.
- Create a checklist.

Build a kit:

Just as you do with your family’s emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for animal survival, such as food and water. Have two kits, one larger kit if you are sheltering in place and one lightweight version for if you need to evacuate. Review your kits regularly to ensure that their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.



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Page 1 of 3

Here are some items you may want to include in an emergency kit for your pet:

- Several days' supply of food in an airtight, waterproof container.
- A water bowl and several days' supply of water.
- An extra supply of the medicine your pet takes in a waterproof container.
- A leash, backup leash, collar, updated ID and rabies tag.
- Copies of your pet's registration information and other relevant documents in a waterproof container and available electronically.
- Traveling bag, crate, or sturdy carrier for each pet.
- Grooming items such as pet shampoo and other items.
- Pet litter and litter box (if appropriate), newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.
- A picture of you and your pet together. If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a photo will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying your pet.
- Familiar items. Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.
- Large animals:
 - Evacuate large animals earlier, whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
 - Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers.
 - Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care and handling equipment.
 - If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to a barn or turn them loose outside.

Evacuation:

If local officials ask you to evacuate, that means your pet should evacuate too. If you leave your pets behind, they may end up lost, injured or worse.

- If you evacuate your home, take your pet's supplies with you.
- Practice evacuating in the car with your animals, so they're more comfortable if you need to evacuate.
- Get your pets familiar with their carriers before severe weather hits in case you need to evacuate.



Shelter:

Many public shelters and hotels do not allow pets inside. Know a safe place where you can take your pets before disasters and emergencies happen.

- Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster.
- Identify pet shelters before the next emergency.
- List the address and number of all the places you can take your pet in an emergency.

Stay informed:

Be prepared and stay informed of the most current conditions. Here are some ways you can stay informed:

- Pay attention to wireless emergency alerts for local alerts and warnings sent by state and local public safety officials.
- Listen to local officials when told to evacuate or shelter in place.
- Download the FEMA app and get weather alerts from the National Weather Service, for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.

More at: www.ready.gov/animals or www.ready.gov/pets.

Visit Prepare For Emergencies Now: Information For Pet Owners. (ready.gov) for a printable brochure for your family and community.

Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6.

