Be Red Cross Ready

Pets and Disaster Safety Checklist

Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. The best way to ensure the safety of your family is to be prepared with a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan includes your pets. Being prepared can help save lives.

Learn First Aid for Your Pets

Dogs and cats are more than pets—they're family. And just like any other family member, pets deserve to be cared for and protected. That's why the American Red Cross has developed Dog First Aid and Cat First Aid, comprehensive guides to help keep pets healthy and safe. From basic responsibilities, like spaying/neutering and giving medications, to managing cardiac emergencies and preparing for disasters, these guides offer information pet owners can trust.

Contact your local chapter to purchase guide books and first aid kits or log on to the Red Cross Store to see all available products.

How can I prepare?

Plan to take your pets with you in an evacuation. If it is not safe for you to stay, it is not safe for them either.

- ❒ Know which hotels and motels along your evacuation route will accept you and your pets in an emergency. Call ahead for reservations if you know you may need to evacuate. Ask if no-pet policies could be waived in an emergency.
- ❒ Most Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety concerns and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are allowed in Red Cross shelters.
- ❒ Know which friends, relatives, boarding facilities, animal shelters or veterinarians can care for your animals in an emergency. Prepare a list with phone numbers.
- ❒ Although your animals may be more comfortable together, be prepared to house them separately.
- ❒ Include your pets in evacuation drills so that they become used to entering and traveling in their carriers calmly.
- ❒ Make sure that your pet's vaccinations are current and that all dogs and cats are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Many pet shelters require proof of current vaccinations to reduce the spread of disease.
- ❒ Consider having your pet "microchipped" by your veterinarian.

What should I do?

Assemble a portable kit with emergency supplies for your pets.

- ❒ Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers so that they can be carried easily. Your kit should include—
  - Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that they can't escape.
  - Food, drinking water, bowls, cat litter/pan and a manual can opener.
  - Medications and copies of medical records stored in a waterproof container.
  - A first aid kit.
  - Current photos of you with your pet(s) in case they get lost. Since many pets look alike, this will help to eliminate mistaken identity and confusion.
  - Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
  - Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

Know what to do as the disaster approaches.

- ❒ Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.
- ❒ Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- ❒ Ensure that all pets are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification.
- ❒ Check that your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- ❒ Bring pets inside so you won't have to search for them if you need to leave quickly.

After a disaster ...

- ❒ The behavior of pets may change dramatically after a disaster, becoming aggressive or defensive, so be aware of their well-being and protect them from hazards to ensure the safety of other people and animals.
- ❒ Watch your animals closely and keep them under your direct control as fences and gates may have been damaged.
- ❒ Pets may become disoriented, particularly if the disaster has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home.
- ❒ Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans.
- ❒ Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

Emergency action plans for your family should include your animals—all of your animals.

For information on disaster planning and emergency actions to take for livestock, horses, birds, reptiles or other small animals, such as gerbils or hamsters, please visit **RedCross.org**, the Humane Society of the United States (**www.HSUS.org**) or **Ready.gov**.

Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If your community has experienced a disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site available through **RedCross.org** to let your family and friends know about your welfare. If you don't have Internet access, call **1-866-GET-INFO** to register yourself and your family.

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For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit **RedCross.org**.

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