

**Pets Are Counting on You**

Pets depend on people for their survival during a disaster. Planning for our furry and feathered friends does not need to be an overwhelming task. There are two critical steps to ensure the safety of your pets if you must evacuate with them during a disaster.

<b>1. PREPARE</b>	<b>2. PLAN</b>
<b>A safe way to transport animals.</b>	<b>Where to take animals.</b>

**Pet Disaster Supply Kit**

To take planning one step further, put together an animal disaster supply kit with everything you will need to care for your animals for at least 72 hours. Store the kit in a place where it is out of direct sunlight and not exposed to moisture. The contents will vary depending on the type and number of animals in your care, but every kit should include the following basic items:

<b>FOOD</b>	Keep a 3-day supply of food in an airtight container. Rotate the food periodically to keep it fresh.
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<b>COLLAR &amp; IDENTIFICATION</b>	Make sure you have a secure collar with up-to-date ID tag attached for pets that normally wear collars. You should put two phone numbers on the ID tag, your cell phone number and the number of someone outside the area that would not be affected by the same disaster as you. If you have not already gotten your dog or cat microchipped, you should do this, in addition to having an ID tag. There is not a more reliable way in which to find your pet if it gets lost. For dogs and cats, also have a harness so they can be safely taken outdoors and walked. For caged animals write your name and contact information in a location where it can be seen on their enclosure. When evacuating birds, cover their cage with a small, lightweight blanket or towel. Smoke and birds don't mix, so you want to reduce the amount of smoke a bird inhales.
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<b>CONTAINMENT &amp; CONTROL SUPPLIES</b>	Do not evacuate a cat without it being in a secure cage, otherwise you run a high risk of the cat escaping. Have a harness so you can walk a dog or cat after you are evacuated. A harness prevents a pet from escaping. Have a secure cage that is the right size for your pet. If you need to house a cat in a cage while you are evacuated, make sure it is large enough for a small litter box, food and water dish, plus space for the cat to lay down. Same is true for a dog, minus the litter box.
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<b>SANITATION ITEMS</b>	For cats you will need a litter box, a small container of scoopable litter and a litter scoop. For dogs you will need poop bags. For small cages animals that have bedding needs, have a backup supply.
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<b>CURRENT PHOTOS OF PETS</b>	Add a folder to your phone where you can store current photos of each of your pets that potentially could escape.
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<b>MEDICATIONS</b>	If your pet is on long-term or short-term medication add this to your disaster kit before you evacuate. Since some medications need to be refrigerated and all medications have an expiration date, do not store medications in your pet's disaster kit.
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### Have a Backup Plan

If you are away from home when a disaster strikes, who would you trust to go to your home and evacuate your animals? You should choose at least two people to be your backup, whether it is to evacuate your animals or at least feed them if you are unable to get home because of roadblocks or other reasons. Whoever you choose, they should live close to you and if they are retired, unemployed or work from home, they would be your best option. In exchange you could be their backup for their animals.

As a last resort, if animals cannot be evacuated, at least set the animals free so they have a fighting chance of surviving. For horses, let them out of the barn or outdoor enclosed area, and then close doors and gates, otherwise if they become frightened out of habit they will return to the place where they normally feel safe and could end up getting trapped.

Remember, that once roadblocks are put in place, officials will not let residents return to their home to get animals. This is the worst situation to be in. Which is even more reason why you must prepare and plan!

If you have an aggressive dog or feral cat, you are going to have to make additional plans for how they can be safely and securely transported and housed once you have evacuated. Animal Emergency Evacuation Shelters may not be able to take animals if they don't have a secure enough enclosure for them, or the animals cannot be easily handled. If you are willing to stay at the location, if that is an option, and help with the animal's daily care, they may accept your dog or cat.

**NOTE: If you must evacuate, your primary concern should be getting yourself and your animals to safety. Do not put lives at risk to grab your animal disaster supply kit. Within several days, supply distribution sites will be set up and there will be food and supplies for animals available. It's still important to be self-sufficient for the first 72 hours if you can be.**