



## Are Your Pets Ready for a Disaster?

Having a plan for disasters can help your pets survive. It can also help them feel less scared and anxious.

After Hurricane Katrina hit, rescuers saved 12,000 stranded pets. But many pets died from the storm. Some who survived the storm died because they did not have food and water. After being rescued, pets need special care too – shelter, food, water and medical attention. It is just as important to have an disaster plan ready for your pets as it is for the rest of your family.



### How can I make disaster plans for my pets?

Follow these steps.

- 1) **Know** what you will do if you need to leave your home in a disaster.
- 2) **Make** a list of places to stay where you can take your pet(s). These might be:
  - homes of friends or family,
  - hotels,
  - pet-friendly shelters.

Include phone numbers, addresses, and directions. Contact your local health department for a list of shelters in your state. Pick a shelter close to home and one farther away that you can go to in case your local shelter is closed. Call them now to ask if they will let you bring your pet with you.

- 3) **Create** a pet care buddy system with a neighbor, friend, or relative. If you are not at home, but your pet needs to be evacuated, this person can help. They should know your pet and its favorite hiding spots. Also, let this person know how to contact you and your veterinarian. This person needs to be able to get into your house, so make sure you give him or her a set of keys.

- 4) **Get** rescue alert stickers from your local humane society, animal shelter or veterinarian's office. Put these stickers on your front door so rescuers know how many pets are in your home. If you leave your home and take your pets with you, write "Evacuated with Pets" over the sticker.

## How can I make a survival kit for my pet?

What you put in your pets' survival kit depends on the type and number of pets you have. Below is a list of things to put in a survival kit for most pets. If you have exotic pets, ask your veterinarian about any special steps you should take to protect their health.

**Food and water:** Pack enough to last for 3 days.

Food and water dishes or bowls: Pack plastic bowls.

**Manual can opener:** Pack one to open food if your pet eats canned food.

**Medicines and medical records:** Include any medicines your pet takes every day. Put copies of medical records, proof of vaccination, license, and any other important documents in a waterproof container.

**First aid kit:** Ask your veterinarian what you need for your pet.

**Collar with ID tag and a harness or leash:** Make sure the identification has up to date information on it. Keep an extra ID tag in your disaster kit. You might want to ask your veterinarian about a permanent ID, like a microchip or registering your pet in a recovery database.

**Litter:** Include pet litter and litter box. You may also want to pack newspapers, paper towels, and plastic trash bags.

**Picture of you and your pet together:** This will be helpful if you and your pet are separated, or if you need proof of ownership. Include a detailed description of your pet as well.

**Favorite things:** Toys, treats, or bedding will help keep your pet happy and calm.

**Carrier:** A pet carrier may help if your pet needs to be placed in a car or van to travel. It should be large enough for your pet to lie down in.

**Crate:** A pet crate should be large enough so that your pet can stand up, turn around and lie down. This might be used for your pet to sleep in.



### For more information:

Visit the American Veterinary Association's Preparing the Whole Family guide:

[http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving\\_family.asp](http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp)



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*The purpose of this newsletter is to provide preparedness information to public health professionals. If you have suggestions for future newsletter topics or to comment on preparedness issues, please e-mail us at [cphp@yale.edu](mailto:cphp@yale.edu)*

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