

disaster planning for your dog

dog training basics

Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, wildfires, hazardous material spills and other disasters can strike anytime, anywhere. In the event of a disaster, proper preparation will pay off with the safety of your family and pet, too.

Be prepared:

While disasters can cause a lot of stress and anxiety, being prepared can help lessen the stress and help you remain calm so you can take care of your family and pets. When preparing disaster kits for your family, make sure to include a kit for your pets, too.

A dog kit should include:

- Recent photographs of your pet and health and vaccination records
- Drinking water in gallon-sized plastic containers
- Pet food and dishes
- Medication(s)
- Pet bed or blankets
- A can opener for wet food
- Treats
- Toys
- Leash
- Carrier or crate
- Cleaning supplies, paper towels, waste pick-up bags
- Pet first aid kit
- List of contact numbers such as veterinarian, nearby shelter, emergency pet hospitals and pet-friendly hotels

Aside from the kit, it is always best to be prepared at home and in your daily life:

- ❑ Always make sure your dog wears an ID tag and is microchipped; if your dog inadvertently gets lost, a tag and chip is their ticket home
- ❑ Have at least a week's supply of dog food and water on hand at all times for your pet, storing the dry food in airtight/waterproof containers
- ❑ If your dog is on long-term medication, keep a backup supply on hand
- ❑ Have a secure carrier and train your dog to be comfortable using it
- ❑ Start a buddy system with someone in your neighborhood so they will check on your dog during a disaster in case you aren't home, agreeing to do the same for them; exchange information on veterinarians and have a permission slip put in your file at the veterinarian's office authorizing your friend to get necessary emergency treatment for your pet should you not be available
- ❑ Know where the animal shelters are in your area, as you may need to visit them after a disaster to look for a missing pet
- ❑ Since pets are not permitted in Red Cross shelters, look for shelters ahead of time to make sure your dog has a place to stay
- ❑ Research hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets: ask about any restrictions on number, size and species; ask if "no pet" policies would be waived in an emergency and make a list of pet-friendly places and keep it handy
- ❑ Check with friends and relatives outside your immediate area and ask if they would be able to shelter you and your pet, or just your pet, if necessary
- ❑ Prepare a list of contact numbers including your veterinarian, an emergency veterinarian and nearby shelter

If you evacuate, take your pet!

The most important thing you can do to protect your dog is to take them with you when you evacuate. Pets left behind in a disaster can easily be injured, lost or killed. In any case, never leave your dog tied or chained outside. If you must leave your dog, then leave them in a room without windows such as a bathroom, garage or laundry room. Make sure to provide plenty of food and water. Leave a note outside the door and outside your home in a visible spot advising the location, type of dog and your contact numbers as well as the number of your veterinarian.

If you leave, even if you think you may be gone only for a few hours, take your pet. Once you leave, you have no way of knowing how long you'll be kept out of the area and you may not be able to go back for your pet.

If you are evacuating, leave early and don't wait for a mandatory evacuation order. An unnecessary trip is far better than waiting too long to leave safely with your pets. If you wait to be evacuated by emergency officials, you may be told to leave your pet behind.

If your pet is not allowed at the temporary shelter, contact friends, family, veterinarians or boarding kennels to arrange for care. Make sure to supply medical and feeding information, food and medicine with your pet.

If you cannot return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current.

If you don't evacuate:

If your family and pet must wait out a storm or other disaster at home, identify a safe area in your home where you can all stay together.

- ❑ Bring your pet into the house and confine them so you can leave with them quickly if necessary
- ❑ Make sure each pet carrier has up-to-date identification and contact information

- ❑ Keep dogs on leashes or in carriers and make sure they are wearing identification
- ❑ Have medications, pet food and water along with your other emergency supplies
- ❑ Be sure to comfort your pet, as they are scared, too, and hearing your voice will help
- ❑ Continue to feed your dog at the regularly scheduled time and provide water at all times

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian.