

Resolve to be Ready!

Disaster Preparedness for Your Pet

If a natural disaster strikes, what will happen to your pet? Be prepared: make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pet.

Leaving pets out of evacuation plans can put pets, pet owners, and first responders in danger. Even if you try to create a safe place for them, pets left behind during a disaster are likely to be injured, lost, or worse. It is your responsibility as a pet owner to find out what type of shelters and assistance are available in your area to accommodate pets and to include pets in your disaster plan to keep them safe during an emergency.

To get started, familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that could impact your area and consider your options for providing care for your pet(s).

Make a Plan

Disasters can happen without warning, so be prepared for these events:

- Make sure your pet(s) wear collars and tags with up-to-date contact information and other identification.
- Microchip your pet(s)—this is one of the best ways to ensure that you and your pet are reunited if you are separated. Always be sure to register the microchip with the manufacturer and keep your contact information up to date with the microchip company.
- Purchase a pet carrier for each of your pets (write your pet's name, your name, and contact information on each carrier).
- Familiarize your pet with its transport crate before a crisis.
- Practice transporting your pet by taking them in for rides in a vehicle similar to one you would be evacuating in.
- Practice catching your pet, if needed.
- Keep a leash and/or carrier nearby the exit.
- Ensure proper equipment for pets to ride in the car (carriers, harnesses, pet seatbelts).
- If you do not have a car, make arrangements with neighbors, family, and friends. You can also contact your local government to learn about transportation options during a disaster.



What have you done to make sure that your pet's needs are met during the next big disaster?

Pet Disaster Preparedness Can Save Lives!

Sheltering in Place

When sheltering at home with your pet, make sure the room chosen is pet-friendly in the following ways:

- Select a safe room, preferably an interior room with no (or few) windows.
- Remove any toxic chemicals or plants.
- Close off small areas where frightened cats could get stuck in (such as vents or beneath heavy furniture).

Sheltering during an evacuation

- Contact your local emergency management office and ask if they offer accommodations for owners and their pets.
- If accommodations are needed for your pet(s).
- Contact local veterinary clinics, boarding facilities, and local animal shelters. Visit the Humane Society Website to find a shelter in your area.
- Contact family or friends outside the evacuation area.
- Contact a pet-friendly hotel, particularly along evacuation routes.
- Make plans before disaster strikes for where you and your pets will go. Be aware that pets may not be allowed in local human shelters, unless they are service animals.

Never leave your pets behind. Arrange a safe haven for your pets in the event of evacuation.

Diseases Pets Can Transmit to People During a Natural Disaster

Natural disasters can contribute to the transmission of some diseases. Exposure to inclement weather conditions, stagnant water, wildlife or unfamiliar animals, and overcrowding can put your pet at risk for getting sick. Some of these illnesses can be transmitted to people. Some common disaster-related diseases that pets can pass to people are listed below.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system in both animals and people. Rabies is transmitted through bites from rabid animals or through contact with their saliva. To protect you and your pet:

- Keep your pet up-to-date on rabies vaccine
- Report any bite wounds to medical personnel immediately
- Practice safe handling of pets in a stressful situation
- Keep your pet in a carrier or on a leash
- Do not allow your pet to interact with other animals

Ringworm is a condition caused by a fungus that can infect skin, hair, and nails of both people and animals. Ringworm is transmitted from animals to people through direct contact with an infected animal's skin or hair or through touching an object where an affected animal has been.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease found in the urine of infected animals that can cause kidney damage and affect other organs. It is transmitted through contact with infected urine or contaminated water, soil, and food.

Diseases spread by mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks: Mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks are common pests of stray animals and can be a problem immediately following a disaster situation. Their bites irritate the skin and may also carry a variety of diseases (Lyme disease, West Nile virus) harmful to both humans and animals.

Article Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention