

Pets & Preparedness

June is National Pet Preparedness month designed to encourage pet and livestock owners to review their emergency plans for the animals.

Your pets are an important member of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plan. To prepare for the unexpected follow these tips with your pets in mind:

1. Make a plan.
2. Build an emergency kit.
3. Stay informed.

Make a Plan

If you have a plan in place for you and your pets, you will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry when you need to make a decision during an emergency. If local officials ask you to evacuate, that means your pet should evacuate too. If you leave your pets behind, they may end up lost, injured or worse.

Things to include in your plan:

- **Have an evacuation plan for your pet.** Many public shelters and hotels do not allow pets inside. Know a safe place where you can take your pets before disasters and emergencies happen.
- **Develop a buddy system.** Plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.
- **Have your pet microchipped.** Make sure to keep your address and phone number up-to-date and include contact information for an emergency contact outside of your immediate area.
- **Contact your local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office** to get additional advice and information if you're unsure how to care for your pet in case of an emergency.

Build a Kit for Your Pet

Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for survival, such as food and water. Have two kits, one larger kit if you are sheltering in place and one lightweight version for if you need to evacuate. Review your kits regularly to ensure that their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.

Here are some items you may want to include in an emergency kit for your pet:

- **Food.** Keep several days' supply of food in an airtight, waterproof container.
- **Water.** Store a water bowl and several days' supply of water.
- **Medicine.** Keep an extra supply of the medicine your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container.
- **First aid kit.** Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs.
- **Collar with ID tag and a harness or leash.** Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag. Have copies of your pet's registration information and other relevant documents in a waterproof container and available electronically.
- **Traveling bag, crate or sturdy carrier,** ideally one for each pet.
- **Grooming items.** Pet shampoo, conditioner and other items, in case your pet needs some cleaning up.
- **Sanitation needs.** Include pet litter and litter box (if appropriate), newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.
- **A picture of you and your pet together.** If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying your pet.
- **Familiar items.** Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

Stay Informed

Being prepared and staying informed of current conditions. Here are some ways you can stay informed:

- **Pay attention** to [wireless emergency alerts](#) for local alerts and warnings sent by state and local public safety officials.
- **Listen to local officials** when told to evacuate or shelter in place.
- **Download the FEMA app** and get weather alerts from the National Weather Service, for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.
- **Always bring pets indoors** at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster.