

# Disaster Preparedness for Pets

When disaster strikes, always keep your pets with you.

If it isn't safe for you to stay put, it isn't safe for your pets.

## Small Animal Evacuation Kit

### Water is essential to Life

Be Prepared to Have Adequate Supplies of Water Available at ALL times!

- ◆ 2 week supply of **food** (dry or canned) per animal
  - \*if canned a manual can opener may be needed
  - Always have a reserve supply of the type of food your pet is used to eating. If your pet eats canned food, buy cans small enough to be used at one feeding since you may not have a way to properly refrigerate any left over food. Store food in an airtight, waterproof container and rotate food at least every three months. Record the diet for each animal, including what NOT TO FEED, in case of allergies
- ◆ Food and water **dish** - plus 1 extra, in case one is lost or misplaced
- ◆ **Spoon** or scoop to measure and/or mix food
- ◆ 2 week supply of **water** per animal
  - A 10 lb animal drinks 1 pint (16 fluid ounces) of water per day
  - A 20 lb animal drinks 1 quart of water per day
  - A 50 lb animal drinks ½ gallon of water per day
- ◆ **1 carrier/cage per animal**, labeled with emergency contact information. The crate must be large enough for your pet to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably and allow room for a food and water dish (and litter pan if applicable)
- ◆ A proper fitting **collar or harness** and **identification tags** should be kept on each pet at ALL times - and a sturdy 6 foot long **leash** for each dog should be readily accessible
- ◆ Have a **spare identification tag** with your disaster supplies that you can write on. If you are going to be living somewhere temporarily you can put the address and telephone number of that location on each pet's tag or the contact information of a close friend or relative that would take responsibility for your pet(s) if necessary. This is a stressful time for animals and a frightened dog can slip out of a collar, but not a **harness**. If you don't want to use a harness, along with the sturdy leash, you should have a slip lead that goes around the pet's neck. Again, this reduces the chances of a pet slipping his/her collar

- ◆ 2 week supply of **medications** - list each animal separately along with the name of that pet's medication, the dose and frequency given. Provide veterinary hospital and pharmacy telephone numbers for refills.
- ◆ **pet first aid kit**
- ◆ cat **litter, liners and litter pan**, if applicable
- ◆ **plastic bags** to handle waste
- ◆ **cleaning supplies**, paper towels, soap (for food and water bowl) and disinfectant (cleaning carrier/crate)
- ◆ **toys and special comfort items** (toy, blanket, small bed, etc.)
- ◆ **muzzle**, if necessary
- ◆ **proof of pet ownership** - current pictures (with and without family members in the photo for proof of guardianship), copies of adoption papers, registration papers, proof of purchase, microchip/tattoo numbers and registry phone numbers. List each of your animals indicating their species/breed, age, sex, whether neutered/spayed, color and any distinguishing characteristics.
- ◆ **Veterinary records** - vaccination history (types of vaccines and dates given) - current rabies certificate - important test results (FeLV, FIV, Heartworm) - list any current or previous medical conditions
- ◆ **Lost animal posters** with emergency contact information and the pet's picture - just in case a pet escapes and you have no way to print up flyers
- ◆ List of important **emergency contacts** and telephone numbers
  1. Numbers where you can be reached (pager, cell phone, work number)
  2. Your prearranged evacuation site
  3. Local contact person in case of emergency when you are not available - who will take responsibility for your animal(s)
  4. Out-of-state contact person in case of emergency when you are not available – who will take responsibility for your animal(s)
  5. Your veterinarian
  6. Local Animal Control/Services
  7. Local animal shelter / humane society / SPCA
  8. Local police department
  9. Local fire department
  10. Local Red Cross chapter
  11. United States Department of Agriculture Missing Pet Network

These contact numbers can be used by rescue personnel responding to a disaster affecting your animals, a neighbor or pet sitter or by you during a disaster or an evacuation. Keep one copy near your telephone and one copy in your animal evacuation kit. Indicate the number of animals that need to be rescued that live in your home and their favorite hiding spots.

Instruct where your house capture or restraint equipment is and the location of animal carriers/crates.

## **Hurricanes, floods, wildfires, hazardous materials spills – Disasters can strike anytime, anywhere.**

If you think you will never have to evacuate unless you live in a flood plain, near an earthquake fault line or in a coastal area, you may be tragically mistaken. It is imperative that you make preparations to evacuate your family and your pets in any situation. In the event of a disaster, proper preparation will pay off with the safety of your family and pets.

### **1- If you evacuate, Take your Pets**

The single most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to take them with you when you evacuate. Animals left behind in a disaster can easily be injured, lost or killed. Animals left inside your home can escape through storm damaged areas, such as broken windows. Animals turned loose to fend for themselves are likely to become victims of exposure, starvation, predators, contaminated food or water, or accidents. Leaving dogs tied or chained outside in a disaster is a death sentence.

- ◆ If you leave, even if you think that you may be gone only for a few hours, take your animals. 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 pets.
- ◆ Leave early - 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 want to be evacuated by emergency officials, you may be told to leave your pets behind.

### **2 - Find a Safe Place Ahead of Time**

Because evacuation shelters generally don't accept pets (except for service animals), you must plan ahead to ensure that your family and pets will have a safe place to stay. Don't wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- ◆ Contact 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 will be waived in an emergency. Make a list of pet-friendly places and keep it handy. Call ahead for a reservation as soon as you think you might have to leave your home.
- ◆ Check with friends, family, or others outside your immediate area. Ask if they would be able to shelter you and your animals or just your animals, if necessary. If you have more than one pet, you might have to be prepared to house them separately.
- ◆ Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinary offices that might be able to shelter animals in emergencies; include 24-hour telephone numbers.
- ◆ Ask your local animal shelter if it provides foster care or shelter for pets in an

emergency. This should be your last resort, as shelters have limited resources and are likely to be stretched to their limits during an emergency.

### **3 - As the Disaster Approaches**

Don't wait until the last minute to get ready. Warnings of hurricanes or other disasters may be issued hours, or even days, in advance.

- ◆ Call to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pet(s).
- ◆ Bring pets into the house and confine them so you can leave with them quickly if necessary. Make sure each pet and pet carrier has up-to-date identification and contact information. Include information about your temporary shelter location.
- ◆ Make sure your disaster supplies are ready to go, including your pet disaster kit.

### **4 - After the Storm**

Planning and preparation will help you weather the disaster, but your home may be a very different place afterward, whether you have taken shelter at home or elsewhere.

- ◆ Don't let pets roam loose. Familiar landmarks and smells might be gone, and your pet will probably be disoriented. Pets can easily get lost in such situations.
- ◆ For a few days, keep dogs on leashes and keep cats in carriers inside the house. If your house is damaged, they could escape and become lost.
- ◆ Be patient with your pets after a disaster. Try to get them back into their normal routines as soon as possible, and be ready for behavioral problems that may result from the stress of the situation. If behavioral problems persist, or if your pet seems to be having any health problems, talk to your veterinarian.

#### **Evacuation Planning:**

You may not be in a flood zone or have to flee wildlife, but even a hazardous material incident on a nearby street could force you to evacuate. It pays to be prepared!

## **Alternate Plans in Case of a Disaster**

### **What happens if you can't get home?**

1. Keep current identification information on all of your pets, even if they are totally indoors
2. Leave extra water
  - a. **water is more essential than food**
  - b. Leave an extra bowl; consider an automatic waterer
  - c. don't close the toilet lid

3. Put a notice on entry doors and windows letting rescue personnel that there are pets inside your home.
4. Make arrangements with a neighbor, friend, or pet sitter that:
  - knows the animal(s) and feels comfortable with them
  - knows where your disaster supply kit is kept
  - has a key to your house
  - knows how to contact you or your emergency contact

**What if there is an immediate emergency with little to no warning?**  
(such as a fire or event that causes you to suddenly evacuate)

### **PRACTICE DRILLS ARE ESSENTIAL**

1. Practice exiting your home blindfolded
2. Place a pair of shoes and a flashlight under your bed, so that they are readily available during an emergency
3. Practice gathering all your family members, animals, and emergency supplies and exiting the house with your animals secured (in carriers, crates, or even pillowcases as cat bags)
4. Consider taking a CPR class and First Aid class - contact your local American Red Cross chapter for course schedule

These drills should be done more than once - the goal is to become more proficient and save time with each practice drill.

## **Facts About Water**

Water is the single most abundant substance in the human body, making up to 60% of an adult's weight, up to 80% of an infant's weight, and 60% of your pet's weight. A person can live several days without food, but just a few days without water. It is second only to air in importance to life. Because water is so important to human survival, NEVER RATION IT. Drink at least 2 liters per day, as long as supplies last, and look for alternative sources.

### **Water Sources**

In the home:

- ◆ Melt ice cubes
- ◆ Electric Hot Water Tank - turn off the power that heats it, and let the tank cool down. Then place a container underneath and open the drain valve at the bottom of the tank. Don't turn the tank on again until water services are restored.
- ◆ Toilet Tank - the water in the tank (not the bowl) is safe to drink unless chemical

treatments have been added.

- ◆ Water Pipes - release air pressure into the plumbing system by turning on the highest faucet in the house. Then drain the water from the lowest faucet.
- ◆ Water Beds - avoid water from water beds as a source for drinking water. Pesticidal chemicals are in the plastic casing of the bed and chemicals have probably been added to the water to prevent the growth of algae, fungi, and bacteria. This water is only safe for hand-washing and laundering.

### Outside the home:

Rain water, spring water and water from streams, rivers, lakes, and coiled garden hoses can be used after it is purified. Avoid water with floating material, an odor or a dark color. Non-sterilized water may be contaminated with the parasite Giardia.

### Purifying Water

- ◆ Heat Sterilization: Boiling water is the preferred method of purification because disease-causing microorganisms cannot survive the intense heat. Bring water to a rolling boil for 10 minutes. Pour the water back and forth from one clean container to another to improve the taste. Adding a pinch of salt could also help.
- ◆ Chemical Sterilization: In some situations, boiling water may not be an option. The alternative is to treat the water chemically. Plain household chlorine bleach may be used. Be sure the label states that hypochlorite is the only active ingredient. Bleach containing soap or fragrances is NOT acceptable. With an eye dropper, add 8 drops of bleach per liter of water (16 drops if the water is cloudy), stir and let stand. After 30 minutes the water should taste and smell of chlorine. At this time it can be used. If the taste and smell (and appearance in the case of cloudy water) has not changed, add another dose and let stand. If after 1 hour the water does not have a chlorine smell, do not use it.
- ◆ Purification Tablets: Purification tablets release chlorine or iodine. They are inexpensive and available at most sporting goods stores and some drugstores. Follow the package directions. Usually one tablet is enough for 1 quart of water. Double the dose for cloudy water.

### ***Water is essential to Life***

Be Prepared to Have Adequate Supplies of Water Available at ALL times!