

Emergency Preparedness Pointers



Pets and Disaster

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. Many disasters may require you to evacuate your home. *If you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too.* Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

1 Have a Safe Place to Take Your Pets

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the *only* animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to take action.

- ◆ Contact the Idaho Humane Society at 342-3508. The Idaho Humane Society with other local animal shelters and volunteers can assist you in caring for your animals.
- ◆ Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets. Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call the hotel ahead for reservations.
- ◆ Ask friends or relatives whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- ◆ Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour numbers.

2 Assemble Portable Pet Disaster Supplies

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you’ll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:

- ◆ Medications, medical records and a first aid kit.
- ◆ Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can’t escape.
- ◆ Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- ◆ Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan and can opener.
- ◆ Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, and the name and number of your veterinarian.
- ◆ Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable

3 Know What to do as a Disaster Approaches

Warnings may be issued hours, even days in advance. At the onset of disaster, act to protect your pet.

- ◆ Call ahead to confirm shelter arrangements for your pets.
- ◆ Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment’s notice.
- ◆ Bring all pets into the house so that you won’t have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- ◆ Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location.



If You *Must* Leave Your Pets

If you evacuate and have to leave your pets at home, prepare a safe location for them.

- ◆ Leave familiar items such as their bedding and favorite toys
- ◆ Leave a two or three day supply of dry food, even if it’s not their usual food. Moist food may spoil.
- ◆ Leave water in a sturdy, no spill container. If possible, open a faucet slightly and let the water drip into a big container.
- ◆ Replace a chain link “choker” collar with a leather or nylon collar. Make sure the collar has tags and identification.