

Preparing your pets for hurricane disaster

The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act of 2006 mandates FEMA to ensure all state and local emergency plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals.

To have ready in the event of an emergency:

Be sure to have your pet evacuation & disaster kit close at hand, along with other emergency supplies. Ensure that your pets are wearing their ID tags. Have them either on a leash or in a carrier. See below for a pet disaster kit checklist.

Ensure vaccinations and licenses are up to date. Have pet vaccinated against rabies and other diseases. Many kennels and shelters will not take pets without proof of vaccinations, and if a pet is injured or becomes ill during the storm, access to medical records will help vets provide better care.

Consider asking your pet's veterinarian for a prescription for pet tranquilizers to keep on hands in case of an emergency event if your pet is nervous and be sure you know the correct dosing amounts and technique.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers. Research hotels and motel options and print out the list of accommodations in various cities and keep it with your pet evacuation & disaster kit.

Consider having your pet micro-chipped in case it is lost or you are separated. If a pet becomes lost or escapes during the confusion of an emergency event or evacuation situation, proper identification will increase the chances of a safe return home. For more information about micro-chipping, contact your veterinarian or local shelter and they will be glad to help you out. An alternative option, although not as secure, is to register your pet with awolpet.com (<http://www.awolpet.com/>)

In the event a disaster strikes or an evacuation order comes while you're away from home, line-up a trusted caregiver to look after your pets. Consider someone who lives or works close to your home. Be sure the caregiver is comfortable with your pets, knows the location of your pet evacuation & disaster kit, and has keys to your house.

Place an emergency decal on your front window or door; if disaster strikes while you are not home, this decal will alert rescuers of the animals inside. It is a safety measure for everyday emergencies as well as disasters. If a disaster strikes when you're not home and your caregiver is unable to reach your pets, this decal will alert rescue workers that pets are inside your home. If you and your pets must evacuate (and time permits) write "Evacuated" across the decal. Be sure it is visible to rescue workers, and that it includes the types and number of pets in your household. These can be ordered on-line and purchased at pet supply stores.

Emergency Kit Checklist (note: many items in this kit are required to check into a pet-friendly shelter, a boarding facility or some hotels):

- Carrier and/or cage
 - Have a pet carrier large enough for animal to stand, turn around, and hold food and water bowls. Be sure to post your name, address and [phone](#) number on the top of your pet's carrier. If possible, also provide information on where you are evacuating to. Post a feeding schedule on the top of your pet's carrier. Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems and the name and number of your veterinarian.
 - Line the floor of the carrier with blankets and padding or a bed that will keep your pet comfortable for an extended time
- Pack pet food and water supply for at least seven days. Wrap dry food in waterproof bags. Wet [food](#) is not recommended unless you can provide it in single serving containers, due to the fact that refrigeration may not be available. Bring can opener if necessary. Bring bowls for the food and water.
- For large animals, have a two-week supply of hay, feed and water secured in plastic water-tight containers.
- Snacks (dog biscuits, cat treats...)
- Litter and litter box, liners and scooper
- Plastic bags for waste cleanup
- Pack comfort items for pets to help them feel secure and reduce stress and minimize trauma (a favorite toy, blanket, cushion, small rug...)
- Check pet's vaccination schedule
- Immunizations and vaccination papers, first-aid supplies, bedding, grooming tools, and toys. Store vaccination papers and medical records and special instructions about your pet's behavior in a waterproof bag.
- Pet tranquilizers as needed
- Pack first aid supplies for pets
- Attach a current rabies license tag and temporary I.D. tag with name and number of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. Make sure all I.D. tags are up to date
 - Put a temporary identification tag on your pet. If you are staying at a shelter, hotel or other temporary site, a temporary identification tag with your current location information and a cell phone number or other number where you can be reached will help you find your pet if you get separated.
- Collar, leash, harness, and muzzle – never use a choke chain to attach tags
 - Make sure that the collar, leash and harness fit properly
- Current photo of your pet and written description / Take a photo of the pet with a family member as proof of ownership.
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes.
- On horses and livestock, either body clip or use non-toxic livestock markers to paint the owner's name and phone number on the neck.
- Braid a waterproof luggage tag with owner information into the tail.

- Additional helpful items include flashlight, blanket, yard stake and long leash, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items, and household bleach.
- Be prepared to temporarily leave your pet in someone else's care (be able to provide care and feeding instructions and items needed)
- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier.
- In cold weather, make certain you have a blanket over your pet's cage. This may also help reduce the stress of traveling.
- In warm weather, carry a spray bottle to periodically moisten your bird's feathers.
- Have recent photos available, and keep your bird's leg bands on for identification.
- If the bird carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels that you can change frequently.
- Keep the bird carrier in as quiet an area as possible.
- It is particularly imperative that birds eat on a daily basis, so purchase a timed feeder. If you need to leave your bird unexpectedly, the feeder will ensure his daily feeding schedule.
- Items to keep on hand: Catch net, heavy towel, blanket or sheet to cover cage, cage liner.
- A snake may be transported in a pillowcase, but you should have permanent and secure housing for him when you reach a safe place.
- Take a sturdy bowl that is large for your reptile to soak in. It's also a good idea to bring along a heating pad or other warming device, such as a hot water bottle.
- Lizards can be transported like birds (see above).
- Small animals, such as hamsters, gerbils, mice and guinea pigs, should be transported in secure carriers with bedding materials, food and food bowls.
- Items to keep on hand for small animals: Salt lick, extra water bottle, small hidebox or tube, a week's worth of bedding.

Information on Evacuation:

If you must evacuate, always bring your pets with you. If it's not safe for you to be in your home, then it's not safe for your pets.

It is important to make plans for your pet's evacuation in advance of the event. Most emergency shelters will not accept pets. Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Further, most kennels, veterinarians, and animal shelters are usually filled beyond capacity. As an exception, service animals that assist people with disabilities are allowed in Red Cross shelters.

Options: Many communities are developing pet-friendly shelter plans. In most locations, shelters that allow pets are announced by local officials upon opening. Pet owners will

need to check with officials and/or local emergency managers on pet-friendly shelters. Most shelters will have a limit on the number of pets permitted. Ask a local veterinarian office and humane society for safe pet boarding options. Check with family, friends or hotels. Keep in mind that pets are much better off with their owners than at a pet boarding facility. Never leave your pet alone at home, or in a vehicle, when an evacuation is called.

Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

Hotels: “There are over 12,000 lodgings in the United States that accept pets” in addition, during a disaster evacuation, many hotels/motels will waive their no-pet policy. Check with individual hotel/motel.

(citation) http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/animalcare/pdf/hurri_brochure.pdf

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. 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 ahead for reservations.

Below is a list of websites that will assist you in locating a pet-friendly hotel/motel.

Remember to call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.

Bring all pets into the house well in advance of the event or evacuation so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry. Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.

Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.

Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

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. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet-sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

Your animals will appreciate your calm presence and soft, comforting voice if they are stressed following a disaster or while evacuated, and you may find it comforting to spend time with them, too. Some animals, especially cats, may be too scared to be comforted. Interact with them on their terms. Some animals may find toys, especially long-lasting chew toys, comforting.

Stress or eating different food can cause diarrhea in pets, especially dogs. If your dog is experiencing loose stools, make sure that fresh water is available at all times. Take dogs out for frequent, short walks. If their normal food is unavailable, supplement their food with white rice and cottage cheese. If the problem persists, consult a veterinarian.

Pet friendly hotel websites:

<http://www.1clickpethotels.com/>

<http://hotels.priceline.com/hotels/amenities-home/amenities-gateway/pet-friendly.html>

<http://www.petfriendlytravel.com/>

<http://www.pettravel.com/>

<http://www.dogfriendlyhotels.org/?source=dfh>

<http://www.bringfido.com/>

<http://www.dogfriendly.com/>

<http://www.petsonthego.com/>

<http://www.travelpets.com/>

<http://www.bringyourpet.com/>

<http://www.pettravelcenter.com/>

<http://petswelcome.com/>

<http://www.tripswithpets.com/>

Information Links and citation:

Palm Beach County, FL information

http://www.pbcgov.com/PubInf/News_Room/05-05/05-20-05_prepare.htm

PDF copy of brochure for Palm Beach County (FL) on preparing pets and where to find after hurricane

http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/animalcare/pdf/hurri_brochure.pdf

PDF on pet boarding facilities for Palm Beach County (FL)

http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/animalcare/pdf/Boarding_Facilities_08.pdf
http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/3994/preparing_the_florida_pet_for_hurricane.html?cat=7

PDF map to Palm Beach County (FL) pet friendly shelter location

http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/animalcare/pdf/pet_friendly_shelter_map.pdf

Article on preparing pets for hurricane season

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/3994/preparing_the_florida_pet_for_hurricane.html?cat=7

PDF article on preparing pets

http://www.jccegov.com/pdf/news/hurricane%20guide%202008_p6_LR.pdf

Disaster Preparedness and Resource Guide for Pets (web page with good tips and some pet friendly hotel info)

<http://www.tripswithpets.com/prepare.asp>

Article on preparing pets

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EIN/is_2001_June_5/ai_75282406

FEMA article about activities in Florida to assist people in evacuating with pets

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=27160>

NHC website on preparing pets

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/prepare/pet_plan.shtml

The Humane Society:

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/resources/disaster_preparedness_brochures.html

PDF on Preparing Pets for Disaster

http://www.hsus.org/web-files/PDF/DIST_DisasterPetBrochure.pdf

PDF on horse evacuation

http://www.hsus.org/web-files/PDF/DIST_DisasterHorseBrochure.pdf

PDF on livestock disaster preparation

http://www.hsus.org/web-files/PDF/DIST_DisasterLivestockBro.pdf

FEMA main site on animals in emergencies – has PDF brochures and videos

<http://www.fema.gov/individual/animals.shtm>

FEMA site on preparing pets

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/animals.shtm>

The Red Cross

<http://www.lowcountryredcross.org/Hurricane.pdf>

Good website for additional information about caring for pets during storms

<http://www.uan.org/index.cfm?navid=36>

ASPCA website on pet preparation and care during emergency

http://www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=disaster_evacuation

PDF brochure on pet preparedness

<http://www.asPCA.org/site/DocServer/ReadyPets->

[FINAL_Rev_9_5.03.06_HiRes_for_Printer.pdf?docID=8361](http://www.asPCA.org/site/DocServer/ReadyPets-FINAL_Rev_9_5.03.06_HiRes_for_Printer.pdf?docID=8361)

Gulf Coast State Information:

Louisiana:

Article from Louisiana on knowing what to do with pets during emergency

<http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/newsrelated/petplan70908.htm>

“Current planning calls for parishes to make decisions, on a parish by parish basis, whether to accept non-domesticated pets such as snakes and other reptiles for transport to shelter locations.

Pet owners are reminded to have the necessary ownership and vaccination papers ready for examination by officials in order to transport their pets. Pet owners who will be self-evacuating should be prepared to take their pets with them and have pet disaster kits that include:

- Proper identification including immunization records and current photo
- Ample supply of food and water
- A carrier or cage, pet beds and toys
- Medications, medical records and a first aid kit
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that animals can't escape.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets. “

Louisiana State Animal Response Team website:

<http://www.lsart.org/>

LSART – Shelter Transportation and Evacuation Manual including information on emergency pet shelters

http://www.lsart.org/site/view/107338_PlanningResources.pml

<http://emergency.louisiana.gov/prepare.html>

Website for Louisiana on preparing your pets includes phone numbers of pet shelters. Pet-friendly shelters may be opened during an evacuation. This information will be available at shelter information points.

Ask a local veterinarian office and humane society for safe pet boarding options. Shelters that allow pets are announced by local officials upon opening.

Texas:

Websites for traveling in Texas with dogs

<http://www.dogfriendly.com/server/travel/guides/us/usstateTX.shtml>

<http://www.brazoanimalshelter.org/hotelpetsallowed.htm>

Humane Society

http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/press_releases/severe_flooding_northern_texas.html

Texas Animal Health Commission emergency management and response

<http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/>

Interesting 23 page pdf document describing the problems of animal and pet care in emergency situations

<http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/HurricaneEvacuationAndMassCarePlan-Att6.pdf>

Mississippi:

State websites on pets and disasters

Mississippi Board of Animal Health – information and tips on preparing your pet and how to find out about the locations of pet-friendly shelters and what is needed to check into a pet-friendly shelter with a pet and rules for pet owners during their shelter

http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/events_news/indexHurricaneSeason.html

http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/emergency_programs/evacuation_transport_sheltering.htm

http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/emergency_programs/preparing_evacuation_pets.htm

Article on Mississippi Pet Friendly Shelter Requirements

<http://www.wlox.com/Global/story.asp?S=4975728>

Here's a list of requirements for staying at the pet-friendly shelter:

- Must bring proof of current vaccinations
- Pet must wear ID
- Bring a leash
- Must bring pet carrier
- Bring enough pet food and bowls for three days
- Bring three day supply of medications if needed
- Toys and treats are a good idea to reduce stress

Here are some general tips for evacuating with your pet:

- Store medications/medical records in waterproof container
- Bring sturdy leashes/carriers for storm evacuations
- Make sure pet has ID tag and collar
- Take enough pet food and water for three days

<http://statevet.ncbc.jsums.edu/>

To locate veterinary clinics in Mississippi

Alabama

Article on preparing dogs for an emergency in Alabama

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/U/UNP-0055/>

Florida

ASPCA has information on who to contact about pet-friendly shelters

http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=disaster_evacuation

Good website with up to date information on pet-friendly shelters in FL

<http://www.floridapets.net/petfriendlyshelters.html>

Florida Division of Emergency Management pet preparedness site

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/petplan.htm>

If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger! Confine your pet to a safe area inside -- NEVER leave your pet chained outside! Leave them loose inside your home with food and plenty of water. Remove the toilet tank lid, raise the seat and brace the bathroom door open so they can drink. Place a notice outside in a visible area, advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.