



Including Your Pets in Disaster Preparedness Plans

The Oregon Humane Society encourages pet owners to keep their pets in mind when preparing for disaster or an emergency.

Having a plan and a kit ready to go will help keep pets safe in a disaster or emergency situation:

Assemble a pet survival kit and be prepared to evacuate with your pets

In order to contain and control your pets during an evacuation, you'll need a sturdy harness and leash for each dog and a carrier for each cat. In choosing a cat carrier, choose one that is large enough to serve as a temporary apartment for your cat.

Pre-pack your pet's kit in a backpack for ease in transportation and include supplies for at least one week. Include current photos of your pets in case they get lost.

Include dry food, a manual can opener for any canned food, clumping cat litter, drinkable water, serving dishes, small litter box, litter scoop, and plastic bags for waste disposal.

A pet first aid kit is essential. Include any medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container). Include 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.

You can also include pet beds or favorite toys, if easily transportable.

Tag, microchip, and photograph your pets

Current pet identification is the single most important thing you can do to help ensure that you will be reunited with a lost pet. Make certain your pet (even an indoors-only cat) is wearing a collar with visible identification tags with your phone number. A microchip implant is a secure form of identification that can't be lost. Be sure to carry a photograph with you to increase the likelihood of finding a missing pet.

TIP: if your mobile phone has a camera, take and store photos of your pets on your mobile phone.

Get to know your neighbors

Your neighbors may be home when a disaster hits and may be your best resource for evacuating your pets if you are at the office or away from the area and unable to reach your home.

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Have an alternative-shelter plan for your pets

If you must evacuate your home, do not leave your pets behind. If it is unsafe for you to remain, then it is unsafe for your pets as well. In a widespread emergency, the Red Cross sets up shelters to deal with human needs, but only service dogs are permitted inside. Therefore, you will need to have a separate shelter plan for your pets.

Friends and family residing outside your immediate area are a possibility. Check with them to see if they would be willing to help shelter your pets.

Contact hotels and motels outside your local area to check their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies can be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with your disaster supplies.

Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.

Be prepared to shelter pets in need

Giving temporary shelter to misplaced pets during a disaster saves lives. If you do take in a lost dog or cat, make sure to let rescue organizations know so that the animal can be reunited with its family.

Help Emergency Workers Help Your Pets

The ASPCA recommends using a rescue sticker alert to let emergency responders know that pets are inside your home. Make sure the sticker is visible to rescue workers, and that it includes the types and number of pets in your household and your veterinarian's phone number.

If you evacuate with your pets, (if time allows) write "EVACUATED" across the stickers so rescue workers don't delay by looking for pets who have already been evacuated.