

Emergency Preparedness

Are you ready to evacuate with your pet in an emergency such as a wildfire, natural disaster or other emergency? Emergencies come in many different forms, whether it is evacuating your home on a short temporary basis or a longer unknown amount of time. It is important to be prepared. Below you will find some tips to help you prepare for an emergency.

Before An Emergency Strikes

Your pet should be wearing up-to-date identification at all times. This includes adding your current cell phone number to your pet's tag. It may also be a good idea to include the phone number of a friend or relative outside your immediate area—if your pet is lost, you'll want to provide a number on the tag that will be answered even if you're out of your home. Don't forget to keep your pet's microchip identification current. Pets can easily lose their collars and a microchip with current information will get your pet home to you.



Take Your Pets With You

If you leave, even if you think you may only be gone for a few hours, take your animals. When 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.

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.



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 wait to be evacuated by emergency officials, you may be told to leave your pets behind.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

Emergencies are often time sensitive, so have an emergency kit ready to go. The kit should include:

- food
- water
- medicines (with instructions) for five days.
- medical and veterinary records (many temporary boarding facilities will require proof of vaccinations)
- carrier
- toys
- blanket or bed
- litter box and litter
- current photos of your pet(s) with descriptions in case your pet gets lost



Make a Plan for a Shelter

Plan ahead and do research. Find out what hotels outside of your immediate area might accept pets and make a list of potential boarding facilities for your pets including phone numbers. Check with friends and relatives outside of the area to see if they would be willing to help out.

In Case You Are Not at Home

In case something should happen when you aren't in town, make arrangements for a trusted neighbor to take your pets and meet you at a specified location. Be sure the person is comfortable with your pets and your pets are familiar with him/her, knows where your animals are likely to be, knows where your disaster supplies are kept and has a key to your home.

Tips for horse owners

Make arrangements in advance to have your horse trailered in case of an emergency. If you do not have your own trailer or do not have enough trailer space for all of your horses, be sure you have several people on standby to help evacuate your horses.

Know where you can take your horses in an emergency evacuation. Make arrangements with a friend or another horse owner to stable your horses if needed. Contact your local animal care and control agency, agricultural extension agent, or local emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area.

Inform friends and neighbors of your evacuation plans. Post detailed instructions in several places—including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer, and barn entrances—to ensure they are accessible to emergency workers in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself.

Place your horse's Coggins tests, veterinary papers, identification photographs, and vital information—such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers (veterinarian, family members, etc.)—in a watertight envelope. Store the envelope with your other important papers in a safe place that can be quickly reached.

Keep halters ready for your horses. Each halter should include the following information: the horse's name, your name, your telephone number, and another emergency telephone number where someone can be reached. Spray paint will work in a pinch. Prepare a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible. Be sure to have on hand a supply of water, hay, feed, and medications for several days for each horse you are evacuating.

There may be times when taking your horses with you is impossible during an emergency. So you must consider different types of disasters and whether your horses would be better off in a barn or loose in a field.

