

Disaster Preparedness for Household Pets

A primary key to survival during a disaster is being mentally prepared to react. Contrary to popular belief panic is not the culprit in most disasters. Freezing up and the inability to react in any way kills more people during times of crisis. So keep this mind; *if you aren't able to respond appropriately then no amount of preparation will help you and your pets escape a disaster.*

So what types of disasters are we talking about? Wildfires, wind events, snow storms, floods, mudslides, hazardous material incidents, terrorist attacks, etc. What all these incidents can have in common is that you must be prepared to take care of yourself, family, and pets for 4-7 days without power or water.

Typically there are two choices when disaster strikes, either sheltering in place (staying where you are) or evacuating. If you shelter in place without running water or power what is your plan? Do you have stored water for you and your pets? Do you have a backup generator to keep your refrigerator and heat or cooling systems working?

If you must evacuate, given 10 minutes, what can you pack your disaster supplies into your *smallest* vehicle? Don't count on having your largest vehicle at home all the time. Do yourself a favor and practice this to see if everything including your pets will fit SAFELY in your vehicle. Don't forget to have two ways out of your neighborhood.

Your pets need to have supplies for 4-7 days stored in "Go Bags" or duffel bags that are conveniently located next to crates and cages.

Pets will need: A one week supply of food, water, meds, bedding, and toiletry needs.

Cooling or heating ability, if necessary, and a pet first aid kit.

Towels, paper towels, baby wipes, garbage bags, gloves, etc.

Laminated crate or cage tags with a photo of you with your pet and other basic information.

Don't forget to have a list of locations to land once you have evacuated (boarding facilities, pet friendly motel/hotels, a friend or family member's home, RV, 5th Wheel, Trailers, etc.)

Put together a "family handbook" which should contain copies of important papers, including individual pet information/medical records, Permission to Treat Releases, photos of you with your pet(s) and close ups of pet(s), etc. Make sure you have a duplicate handbook with family or friends outside of your immediate area.

For further information check out the following websites

✓ www.hsus.org/disaster

✓ www.prepare.org/animal

✓ www.oes.ca.gov search Disaster Preparedness for Your Pets