



People for Animal Welfare in El Dorado County

Disaster Preparedness Tips: For Horses

Are you prepared to take care of your horse when a disaster strikes? If not, NOW is the time to stock up on the items that you will need so you will not get caught unprepared. Listed below is a handy shopping list for you to use. The next time you buy food or supplies, take this list with you. Don't put off doing what you should do now - it may just make the difference between being able to keep your horse alive when a disaster strikes and losing them to the disaster or its aftermath.

Here are the supplies that you should have in a disaster kit for horses. Adjust the amounts, depending on the number of horses that you have. Especially if you have more than one or two horses you should consider arranging with a friend or relative who lives away from your immediate potential disaster area, the provision of food and shelter for your horses or livestock.

FOOD

- ⊖ Since a horse's digestive system is very delicate, you should keep the horse on the same diet it is accustomed to during a disaster.
- ⊖ Always have a reserve supply (7 days worth) of the type of food or special feed your horse is used to eating. Store feed in an airtight, water proof container; hay bale storage bags run \$30-40 each. A roll or heavy duty construction garbage bags can be a cheap temporary alternative.
- ⊖ Rotate feed at least once every (3) months; Having routine storage container that can be utilized for an emergency as well provides a practical way to rotate through the food.
- ⊖ Include with your disaster supplies an extra feeding bucket, just in case the one normally used is lost;
- ⊖ Include a hay net in your cache for each horse plus one extra if you will be feeding hay.

WATER

- ⊖ When the water supply is disrupted during a disaster, it can become a real challenge getting enough water to give to a horse, and dehydration can become a major problem for a horse, especially when it is stressed.
- ⊖ Have enough drinking water to last at least one week for each horse - 50 gallon barrels are good for this or garbage cans lined with 50 gallon black garbage bags. Store water in a cool, dark location, and be sure to rotate it so it remains fresh;
- ⊖ Remember that if the tap water is not suitable for humans to drink, it is also not suitable for animals to drink
- ⊖ Include with your disaster supplies an extra water bucket; just in case the one normally used is lost.

SANITATION

- ⊖ Maintaining a clean environment for horses during a disaster will minimize the threat of disease.
- ⊖ Keep at least a one week supply of shavings to be spread out in the horse's stall (be sure that what you use is dry);
- ⊖ In your disaster supplies keep a manure fork in case the one you usually use is lost;
- ⊖ If space allows, have an extra wheelbarrow or muck bucket which will greatly assist when cleaning a stall
- ⊖ A gallon or half gallon of chlorine bleach to disinfect surfaces and for periodic cleaning of feed and water bins. Dilute at the rate of 1 part chlorine to 30 parts of water.



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IDENTIFICATION

- ⊖ It is important to have some type of identification on your horse during a disaster which would include such forms of identification as: microchipping, tattoos or freeze branding.
- ⊖ If your horse is not permanently identified, there are some options for temporary identification, which include:
 - Using a livestock crayon and write your name, phone number, and address on the horse;
 - Using clippers to shave your name, address, and phone number in the horse's coat;
 - Braiding into the horse's mane an identification tag with your name, address, and phone number on it;
- ⊖ Have a spare identification tag with your disaster supplies that you can write on, so that if you are going to be living somewhere temporarily you can put the phone number and address of that location on the tag and braid it into the horse's mane;
- ⊖ In with your disaster supplies keep some current photographs of your horse, including in some of the pictures the person(s) who owns the animal, so that they can be used to prove ownership should your horse get lost and you have to reclaim it;
- ⊖ In with your disaster supplies include a copy of the Bill of Sale for your horse or other documentation that can be used to prove ownership.

FIRST AID KIT

- ⊖ Check with your veterinarian to find out what he/she recommends you include in your first aid kit. Also get there recommendation for a good first aid book and or class.
- ⊖ Some suggested items include: cotton sheets or standing wraps; war wraps; brown gauze; stretch gauze; gauze sponges; disposable surgical gloves; vet wrap; elastacon; duct tape; sterile telfa pads; povidone iodine solution or chlorhexidine solution; povidone, chlorhexidine or triple antibiotic ointment; instant cold packs; easy boot or equivalent; diapers; bandage or paramedic scissors; tweezers or hemostats; and a thermometer for daily temperature checks.

MEDICATIONS

- ⊖ If your horse is on long term medication, always have on hand at least a (2) week supply, since your vet may not be able to refill a prescription for awhile;
- ⊖ Check with your veterinarian, preferably a mobile veterinarian, to see if he/she has a disaster plan - if not, consider developing a disaster plan with their help that involves a number of large animal veterinarians in your region or finding a veterinarian in your area who already has a plan so that you can get medical care for your horse should it get injured during a disaster;
- ⊖ Keep your horse's medical records, including records of vaccinations, with your disaster supplies;
- ⊖ It is important to keep your horse up-to-date on vaccinations, especially tetanus as the risk of getting cut during a disaster greatly increases;
- ⊖ Keep with your disaster supplies a current copy of your horse's Coggins certificate if you have one.

GROOMING SUPPLIES

- ⊖ Don't forget an extra set of brushes, hoof pick and fly spray.



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EVACUATING YOUR HORSE

- ⊖ In case you have to evacuate your horse, you should have a horse trailer and a truck that can safely pull it, but be sure to maintain the trailer so that it is safe to pull - a safety check includes looking at:
 - the floor of the trailer
 - the trailer hitch
 - the tires
 - the lights
- ⊖ If you do not have a trailer or enough trailer space for the number of horses that you have, then work out ahead of time other arrangements for transporting your horse(s).

TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR HORSES

- ⊖ If you have to evacuate your horse, you may not have a barn with stalls to take it to, there are a couple of temporary solutions for this, but all require a test run and or practice to make sure they are a workable solution for your horse(s)
 - Teach your horse to tie on a high line kit.
 - Teach your horse to hobble
 - Utilize a portable electric fence system preferably one that runs off solar power.
- ⊖ In with your disaster supplies you should have a halter and lead rope for each of your horses and it is best to have leather halters and cotton lead ropes and not nylon, so that in the event of a fire they will not melt.
- ⊖ As mentioned earlier with horses and other large animals, it is especially important to make arrangements ahead of time as to where they can be sheltered if you need to evacuate them. Some suggestions for temporary housing include equine centers, boarding stables, racetracks, and fairgrounds in addition to friends and relative.
- ⊖ It is a good idea to have a community evacuation plan if there are lots of horses in the area where you live. Setting up a "buddy" system can help to save the life of your horse too.
- ⊖ Remember it takes time to move larger animals, so allow plenty of time to get them to safety. Do not wait until the last minute. If you have a horse that is not accustomed to being in a trailer, practice loading and unloading with the horse. During the emergency is not the time to convince a horse who has never been in a trailer to go inside one.

SHELTER IN PLACE

- ⊖ As part of a community disaster plan consider the concept of sheltering in place.
- ⊖ Locate a safe area for a given emergency type. For flooding high ground is critical, for wildland fires a vegetation free zone.
- ⊖ This safe area should be within walking distance for your community members preferably with safe escape routes to the area for all community members. This may require routine vegetation management and removal to provide these routes but should make your neighborhood safer in the process.
- ⊖ The safe area should have the ability to separate animals into a number of groups by existing fencing or through the use of a cache of temporary electrical fencing. Sturdy anchors to attach a high line for horses trained to tie would also be beneficial.