

## Pet Care in an Emergency

In the event of an emergency are you prepared to take care of those not able to care for themselves? Our dogs, cats and other animals are very much a part of our families, are you prepared to care for all of your loved ones, including your pets? Experts tell us that we should take the same steps when preparing to care for our pets in the event of a disaster that we would for ourselves. Make sure you have stored enough pet food for three days in an airtight waterproof container. In addition to the drinking water that you are storing for your family, you will want to include enough water to meet the needs of your furry friends. You can also expand your own first aid kit to include your pet's emergency needs, including pet medications and medical records. Each cat and dog should have a collar, appropriate license and leash. If you are required to evacuate your home, having a crate or other pet carrier is helpful. Make sure there is enough room for the animal to stand, turn around and lie down. Finally, having a recent photo handy of you and your pet with the pet's breed, size, sex, and color will make it easier to reunite you with your loved one if they are separated from you.

Planning ahead is a crucial step to making sure your family survives a disaster. Depending on the situation, you may be required to take shelter in your home. This is when having a 3-Day Plan is essential. There will be situations, however, when your home may be uninhabitable or a mass evacuation of the area is required. In this scenario, your family will need to relocate to a shelter, friend's home or hotel. Most shelters do not allow pets so it is very important that you have a plan which includes temporary housing for your animals. It is also a good idea to have a good neighbor prepared to evacuate your pets should the emergency occur when you are at work or otherwise away from home.

The focus of this article has been dogs and cats. However, many families include horses, hamsters, birds, reptiles, and a variety of other species. You will need to plan appropriately for each of your individual needs should disaster strike your home. Speak to your veterinarian regarding each of your pets and how to plan for an emergency. For more information, check out <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html> and get ready NOW.