8 Tips to Prepare for a Disaster

Best protection is to evacuate pets if possible

In the event of a disaster, pet owners must have plans in place to protect both themselves and their pets. If a disaster forces you to evacuate, the best thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them as well.

Disasters can happen anytime, anywhere and can take many different forms, from barn fires to earthquakes, from a propane line explosion to flooding caused by a violent storm.

While no one is ever 100 percent ready for a disaster, a good plan can make a huge difference if it's thorough and flexible. The following eight tips will help prepare you and your pets for a disaster.

Understand the possibilities. Recognize the different types of natural and man-made disasters that can occur in your area and know how to effectively plan for them.

Make decisions early. Different disasters require different courses of action. The sooner you create a disaster plan, the more time you will have to prepare.

Update identification. Make sure your pet wears current identification at all times that includes his name, rabies tag and your cell phone number since you will not be at home.

Your pet's history. Create a file for each pet that contains health history, vaccination dates and a recent photo. Keep the file in a safe and secure place.

Research animal-friendly places. Know where you can take your pet in the event of an emergency. Evacuation shelters and pet-friendly hotels outside a 60-mile radius of your home are good places to start.

Stock up on emergency supplies. Keep extra leashes, bowls, newspapers, trash bags, cat litter, litter pans and at least a five-day supply of pet food and water on hand.



Get a carrier. Have a properly-sized pet carrier for each pet. Carriers should be large enough for the pet to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably.

Communicate your plan. Make sure that the other people you rely on for your pet's care, like your pet sitter, are privy to your specific pet-care plan in case you are away from home when a disaster strikes.

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