

Considerations for Pet Preparedness

- In an emergency situation, there may come a time when people are required to evacuate their homes. Some will go to hotels, some will go to stay with friends or family, some may go to shelters. In any event, companion animals will need to be taken care of.
 - If evacuating to someplace other than a shelter:
 - Identify pet-friendly hotels and motels within a reasonable driving distance in advance; note restrictions
 - Identify relatives or friends who could care for pets for an interim period
 - If evacuating to a shelter, there will be three possibilities you may encounter:
 - Cohabitated shelter—pets stay in the same space as their parents, parents retain all responsibility for providing daily care. This is optimal.
 - Co-located shelter—pets are housed in a separate area within the same building. Parents retain responsibility for most of the daily care within the guidelines established by shelter staff.
 - Standalone shelter—pets are in a completely different location than people. Shelter staff has primary responsibility for providing daily care. This is the least-preferred option.
 - All of these situations are stressful for pets and their parents; preparing in advance can help reduce that stress.
- Create or buy a “go kit.” This might not be just a simple little tote bag, and it will change in scope with the size and number of pets.
 - Minimum 3 days of food (dry or canned). Each has pros and cons.
 - Can opener (if you opt for wet) plus spoon
 - Minimum 3+ days of water (for both drinking and cleaning)
 - One week supply of medications
 - Collapsible dishes for food and water
 - Cage or carrier for each pet (label with your contact & emergency contact information)
 - Leash, collar, harness for each dog or cat (attach tags)
 - Muzzle for each pet (in case of injury)
 - Work gloves
 - Litter, litter pan and scoop
 - Newspaper or pee pads
 - Toys, treats, blankets
 - Cleaning/hygiene supplies
 - Non-latex gloves
 - Mild dish detergent
 - Paper towels
 - Poop bags
 - Photos, photocopies, and instructions
 - Photos of your pet by themselves as well as with you—many animals look similar and in a chaotic environment, it would be easy for someone to make a mistake. Put contact info on the back of each.
 - Photo of any distinguishing markings: distinctive coloration, bi-eyes, parti-eye, black spot on tongue
 - Not a bad idea to laminate photos in the event of flooding, rain, etc.
 - Photocopies of current vaccination records; remember to update as necessary

- Laminated special instructions including pet's name, a photo, your contact info, veterinary contact info and any special care your pet may need:
 - Special diets
 - Medication list, including dosage and frequency
 - Behavioral traits (e.g., "nervous around strangers")
 - Note—pre-packaged kits that you purchase will likely not have all of the items suggested but can be supplemented.
 - Special considerations for exotic and pocket pets
 - Create a similar laminated document with basic daily care instructions, including temperature and lighting requirements, feeding type and frequency, and other important information. Many animal rescue staff will be pretty well-versed in caring for cats and dogs, much less so for exotics and pocket pets
 - Most all pets can be microchipped-talk to your veterinarian.
 - Special considerations for birds
 - Have a carrier that you use for standard transportation (e.g., vet visits) prepped with cage liners or other suitable material
 - Practice putting your bird in the carrier quarterly to get it more used to being in there
 - Include a blanket or towel large enough to cover the carrier completely
 - If your bird is not microchipped, at least identify it with a leg band
 - All commodities (food, medicine, even water) have expiration dates. Rotate to ensure that all are still viable.
 - PRACTICE your emergency evacuation plan quarterly
 - Remember—animals under stress may react unexpectedly. Always use caution during emergencies.
- Microchipping—single biggest assistance in reuniting pets and owners that have become separated.
 - Inexpensive
 - Painless
 - Low-risk
 - Low maintenance
 - Keep address updated
 - Add new cell numbers
 - Have your vet check that the chip is working as expected during routine visits
 - AVMA has designated August 15 as "[Check the Chip Day](#)." Check to see if your vet is participating.