

Care of Pets in Disasters

Christian Chukwuma, MBBS, MPH; Kelsey Poole, BS; Orji Okereke, MPH; Katherine Fogelberg, DVM, PhD; Melissa Oden, DHEd, LMSW-IPR, MPH, CHES

Care of Pets in Disasters

Pets, service animals and other domestic animals have a special place in the lives of their owners. In disasters, many individuals refuse to evacuate when required if there is no place for their pets and animals. It is therefore critical for owners to make adequate plans to care for, track, transport and shelter pets and animals in times of disasters and emergencies.

Pre-disaster

- If necessary and when recommended, EVACUATE WITH YOUR PETS!
- Make a list of the places where you can get veterinary care, food, shelter and housing for your pets in an emergency.
- Maintain a copy of current pictures of the owner and the pet(s). Include any specific markings for identification purposes.
- **Make a pet emergency kit.**
- Identify shelters in advance that will allow your pets.
- Ensure rabies tags are up-to-date and fastened to the animal's collar.
- Have each pet microchipped. Register the microchip and ensure your contact information is up to date with the microchip company.



Always be prepared:

- Develop a family disaster plan for pets.
- Practice evacuation of your family and pets until evacuation is achieved within a few minutes.
- Determine the best room in the house to keep our pet if you must evacuate without your pet.
- Make emergency arrangements for pet care with neighbors, family and friends. Leave information on how you can be reached, which room the animals are in, and how to care for your pets.
- Establish a telephone tree with contacts living outside of your area.
- Train your pet as obedience may save its life during an emergency.
- Familiarize your pet with being transported. Practice evacuation transportation drills.
- Have a disaster kit for each pet. Kits should be handy and kept in rodent and ant-proof containers. Check disaster kits and replace stored food twice a year.

Items that are recommended for your disaster kit include:

✓ Reflective collars, tags & leashes	✓ Muzzles
✓ Pet food (to last 1-2weeks)	✓ Blankets & pet toys
✓ Manual can opener	✓ Spray disinfectant
✓ Paper Towel, plastic bags	✓ Drinking Water (to last 1-2 weeks) and Bowls
✓ Medications and prescriptions (to last 3-4weeks)	✓ Pictures of pet(s) and owner
✓ Nitrile gloves	✓ Bio-hazard waste bags

- ✓ Your crate should be labeled with your name and contact information, easily accessible and large enough for your pet.
- ✓ Animals may be sheltered in open facilities; ensure there is enough bedding to keep them warm.
- ✓ Include a first aid kit for pets containing latex gloves, bandages, animal antiseptic ointment, clippers, and tweezers.
- ✓ Ensure your pet's vaccinations are current and keep copies of current vaccinations, medical and ownership records in your disaster kit.



