

# Pet Safety Checklist

For many, pets are more than just animals—they are a part of the family. As members of your family, they should be included in your emergency planning process. Make sure your disaster plan addresses what you will do when an emergency requires you to leave your home, leave your pet at home, or prevents you from returning home. A few simple steps to ensure your pet's safety can go a long way when disaster strikes.

## Evacuating With Your Pet

Think about where you will go with your pet and how you will get there if you have to leave home during an emergency. Plan to shelter your pet at a kennel or with friends or relatives outside the area. Also, make a list of boarding facilities and veterinary offices outside your "immediate area" that might be able to shelter animals in emergencies as well as a list of hotels or motels that are currently or will be pet-friendly during an emergency. In planning for an emergency, follow these important steps:

- Arrange for family or friends outside of the affected area to shelter your pet.
- Identify animal-friendly hotels/motels outside of the affected area .
- Talk with your local veterinarian, boarding kennel, or grooming facility to see if they can offer safe shelter for your pet during an emergency.
- Practice your departure plans to familiarize your pet with the process and increase his/her comfort level.
- Know your pet's hiding places so you can easily find him/her during an emergency.
- Keep in mind a stressed pet may behave differently than normal and his/her aggression level may increase. Use a muzzle to prevent bites. Also be advised that panicked pets may try to flee.
- Create a Go Bag for your pet or service animal – a collection of items your pet may need in case of an evacuation. Discuss your pet's Go Bag with your local veterinarian to see if there are any special items that you should include.

## Pet To-Go Bag

- A current color photograph of you and your pet together (in case you are separated).
- Copies of medical records that indicate dates of vaccinations and a list of medications your pet takes and why he or she takes them.
- Proof of identification and ownership, including copies of registration information, adoption papers, proof of purchase, and microchip information.
- Physical description of your pet, including his/her species, breed, age, sex, color, distinguishing traits, and any other vital information about characteristics and behavior.
- Animal first-aid kit, including flea and tick treatment and other items recommended by your veterinarian.
- Food and water for at least three days.
- Food and water dishes.
- Collapsible cage or carrier.
- Muzzle and sturdy leash.
- Cotton sheet to place over the carrier to help keep your pet calm.
- Comforting toys or treats.
- Litter, litter pan, litter scoop.
- Plastic bags for clean-up.



## Pet Safety Checklist, cont.

### If You Are Unable to Get Home to Your Pet

Some emergencies may prevent you from returning home. In planning for such emergencies:

- Identify a trusted friend, neighbor, or dog-walker to care for your pet in your absence. This person should have a set of your house keys, be familiar with your home and pet, know your emergency plan, and have your contact information.
- Put stickers on the main entrances to your home to alert rescue workers of the number and types of pets inside. Update the information on the stickers every six months. Free Rescue Alert stickers can be ordered from the ASPCA.
- Keep a collar/harness, leash, and your pet's Go Bag in a place where it can be easily found.

### Leaving Your Pet at Home

If you have no choice but to leave your pet at home:

- Never leave your pet outside during an emergency.
- Leave a minimum three-day supply of food and water. Consider using a large capacity self-feeder and water dispenser.
- Consult with your veterinarian to develop a plan for your pet's needs.
- Remember to make sure all doors and windows are secure so your pet cannot escape.
- Place a Rescue Alert sticker on the main entrances of your home to alert rescue workers that there are pets inside.

### Proper identification

- Dogs and cats should wear a collar or harness, rabies tag, and identification tag at all times. Identification tags should include your name, address, and phone number, and the phone number of an emergency contact. Dogs should also wear a license.
- Talk to your veterinarian about micro-chipping your pet. A properly registered microchip enables positive identification of your pet if you and your pet are separated.
- Current color photo of your pet (in the event it becomes lost).

### After an Emergency

- Following an emergency, be extra careful when letting your pet loose outdoors and be sure your pet wears an identification tag.
- Familiar scents and landmarks may have been altered, which may cause your pet to become confused or lost.
- In addition, beware of other dangers after a disaster, such as downed power lines and debris created by strong winds or rain.

