



Pets In Disaster

Adapted from FEMA Handbook, "Are you Ready?"



Pets need to be included in your household disaster plans since they depend on you for their safety and well-being. It is important to consider and prepare for your pets before disaster strikes. Consider the following preparedness measures:

1. If you must evacuate, try not to leave pets behind. Realize that if you must leave them behind, there is a chance that they may not survive, or get lost before you return.
2. If circumstances require that you not evacuate your pet, inform the emergency managers of the type of pet left behind. Never try to reenter an evacuated area to retrieve or care for animals without permission of the emergency managers.
3. With the exception of service animals, pets are not typically allowed in emergency shelters for health reasons.
4. Only some animal shelters will provide care for pets during an emergency and disaster situations. They should be used as a last resort. Use friends or family or keep them with you. In all circumstances, you should, to the best of your ability, keep track of who picked up your pet and where it was taken.
5. Find out before a disaster which local hotels and motels allow pets and where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to include some outside your local area in case local facilities are closed. Sometimes, your local emergency management agency can provide animal housing information.
6. Know that most boarding facilities require veterinary records to prove vaccinations are current. Make sure your pet's vaccinations are current and you have proof.
7. Be sure that your pet has proper identification tags securely fastened to the collar or is micro chipped. A current photo or proof of an implanted microchip will assist identification should it become necessary.
8. Make sure that you have a secure pet carrier or leash for your pet. They may need to be restrained during emergency situations.
9. Assemble a disaster kit for your pet. Include pet food, water, medications, veterinary records, litter box, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit, other supplies that may not be readily available during an emergency and an information sheet with the pet's name, and such things as medical or behavioral problems. Provide this kit to whomever assumes responsibility for your pet during a disaster.
10. Call your local emergency management or animal control office for further information.

Animals After Disaster

Wild and stray domestic animals can pose a danger during and after many types of disasters. Remember, most animals are disoriented and displaced, too. If an animal must be removed, call your local animal control or wildlife resource authorities. If an animal bites you, seek medical attention.

Certain animals may carry rabies. Although the virus is rare, care should be taken to avoid contact with wild stray domestic animals. Health departments can provide information on the types of animals that can carry rabies in this area. Be sure that your pet's rabies vaccinations are current and you have proof.

Food, feed and water that has been exposed to flood waters or airborne contaminants should never be offered to animals. This type of food and water may harbor dangerous bacteria, molds or chemicals. Call your local veterinarian or County Agricultural Extension Agent for advice.

The following phone numbers are for more information on animals in disasters in the Knox County area:

American Red Cross	584-2999
Knox County Agricultural Extension Agent	215-2340
Knox County Emergency Management Agency	215-2297
Knox County Animal Control	215-5240
Knox County Health Department	215-5000
The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine	974-8387

