



Wildlife In Disaster

Adapted from FEMA Handbook, "Are you Ready?"



Disaster and life threatening situations will exacerbate the unpredictable nature of wild animals. To protect yourself and your household, learn how to deal with wildlife.

1. Be cautious approaching wild animals during emergency situations. Do not corner or try to rescue them. Wild animals will likely feel threatened and may endanger themselves by running off into floodwaters, fires, etc.
2. If wild animals are trapped or no natural food supply is available, you can leave food appropriate to individual animals (i.e., animals could become trapped on an "island" after seeking high ground as flood waters rise).
3. Wild animals such as snakes, opossums, and raccoons often seek refuge from floodwaters on upper levels of homes and barns and have been known to remain after water recedes. If you encounter animals in this situation, open a window or other escape route and the animal is likely to leave on its own. Do not attempt to capture the animal. Should the animal stay, call your local animal control or wildlife resource office.
4. If you see an injured or stranded animal, do not approach or attempt to help them. Call your local animal control or wildlife resource office.
5. Animal carcasses can present serious health risks. Contact your local emergency management or health department for specific help and instructions.

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 immediate medical attention. If a snake bites you, try to accurately identify the type of snake so that, if it is poisonous, the correct anti-venom can be administered. Do not cut the wound and/or attempt to suck the venom out.

Certain animals may carry rabies. Although the virus is rare, care should be taken to avoid contact with wild and 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.

Rats and other rodents may also be a problem during and after many types of disasters. Be sure to secure all food supplies and contact local animal control authorities to remove any animal carcasses in the vicinity.

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

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| American Red Cross | 584-2999 |
| Knox County Emergency Management Agency | 215-2297 |
| Knox County Animal Control | 215-5240 |
| Knox County Health Department | 215-5000 |
| Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency | 1-800-332-0900 |
| The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine | 974-8387 |

