

Pet Preparedness Tips

Your pet should be part of your Hurricane Plan. During Hurricane Ivan there were reports of people who refused to evacuate and leave their pets behind. There is no reason to put yourself or your pet in that kind of danger. Here's a checklist of things to consider to take care of your pet in the event of a hurricane.

Preparing Your Pet For A Hurricane

- If you will evacuate, determine where your pet will stay.
- If you will be staying with friends or relatives, make sure you may bring your pet.
- If you will stay in a hotel, confirm in advance that they will allow pets.
- If you cannot take your pet with you, reserve space at an animal clinic or boarding kennel. Call early, space maybe limited. Ask about any required vaccinations and additional fees, if you cannot return immediately to pick up your pet.
- The final option is one that no pet owner should have to exercise. If you evacuate (and leave your pet) and your home is even partially destroyed, you should prepare your family for the possible loss of your pet. That's not a very pleasant thought and frankly it's just not necessary. But, if you are forced to leave your pet, confine it to a pet carrier in an interior closet or bathroom with an ample supply of drinking water and food. Include other familiar items such as chew toys, blankets, etc.
- Include pet food, water and your pet's other needs (i.e., medication) in your Hurricane Plan.
- Consider spaying or neutering your pet.
- A portable pet carrier is a must for each pet. It should be large enough to allow the pet room to stand up and turn around.
- Vaccinate your pet by mid-May.
- Identify your pet by current license and rabies tags and/or microchipping, tattooing, or freeze branding.
- Take clear photos of your pet(s), and store them with ownership papers and license information.
- Exotic pets, such as snakes and birds, require special containers (not glass!) If they escape during the storm, the odds of getting them back are poor.

Shelter for Your Pet

If you live in an evacuation zone, have a hurricane plan for your pet prior to the start of hurricane season (June 1st till November 30th). Contact veterinary clinics and boarding facilities in your area to reserve space for your pet. Call early, space is always limited.

- Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with an ID and a leash.
- Pet shelters cannot accept unvaccinated animals. Proof of inoculation is required.

- Bring pet food (enough for at least three days), bottled water and all necessary medications.
- Small animals should be transported in a carrier. If you have a spacious crate, bring it.

Preparing Livestock For A Hurricane

- Livestock should only be boarded in barns that are strong enough to withstand the full storm surge (e.g.: concrete structures). If not leave livestock in a fenced pasture.
- Our area has a horse and poultry population. Most stables and barns are very vulnerable to hurricane force winds. Trailering horses and poultry to other locations can be very time consuming, so leave plenty of time in your hurricane plan.
- Horse and cattle food: place hay and grain in solid, protected areas; store water in "storm-proof" tubs.
- Include antibiotic ointment, betadine scrub solution, neosporin ointment, gauze, and tape in animal First Aid Kits.
- Proper ID should be worn by livestock at all times in case they get lost or injured during a storm.
- Waterproof nametags on a collar are ideal.
- The best bet for large animals is a plastic collar, unless the animal is freeze branded.
- The universal microchip computer ID system is also available.

After The Storm

- Use caution in allowing your pet outdoors after a storm has passed. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, leaving your pet confused and consequently lost.
- Downed power lines, broken glass and other hazards could present real dangers to your pet.
- Try to prevent your pet from consuming water or food outside your home. It may have become contaminated.
- If your pet is lost, you'll need to work quickly, since Animal Control may be forced to destroy some strays gathered after a devastating storm. Contact the Veterinary clinics, boarding facilities, the Humane Society, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in your area. If you find someone else's pet contact the entities above.

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