

# **Disaster and Emergency Readiness for Pets**

## **Supplementary Materials and Ideas for Trainers**

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## Introduction

What would you do with your pet if you had to evacuate your home because of a hurricane, wildfire or some other disaster? What if disaster strikes while you're away from your pet?

If you don't already have a **pet emergency kit** and a **disaster preparedness plan** in place, you need one. Having an emergency kit at the ready and a plan for how to take care of your pet will help keep your pet safe in case of an emergency.

This module will cover:

- 1) Action items you can do **now** to plan for your pet's safety in a disaster
- 2) Specific items that should be included in a **disaster kit** for your pet
- 3) How to care for your pet **during a disaster**
- 4) How to care for your pet **after a disaster** is over
- 5) Useful **apps and documents** to prepare you for a disaster or aid you in the event of a disaster

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## Opener/Background

Emergencies come in many forms, earthquake, fire, severe storms, etc. In the event of extreme weather or a disaster, would you know what to do to protect your pet? Leaving pets out of evacuation plans can put pets, pet owners, and first responders in danger. Be prepared: make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pet.

### **Actions to take before a disaster strikes**

- 1) Understand the disasters your region is at risk for
- 2) Get Identification for your pet
- 3) Make several versions of disaster preparedness plans in case you need to
  - a) Evacuate your home with your pet
  - b) Shelter in place at home with your pet
  - c) Evacuate without your pet
  - d) Are not at home with your pet when the disaster strikes
- 4) Put together a Pet Emergency Kit. The items to include in your kit are:
  - a) Documents
  - b) Water, Food, Medicines
  - c) Other (may be pet specific)
- 5) Practice evacuating your pet, so you will be prepared if a real emergency strikes

### **Tips for pet care during a disaster**

- 1) If you evacuate with your pet
- 2) If you are sheltering in place with your pet
- 3) If you have no choice but to evacuate without your pets

### **How to care for your pet after a disaster**

- 1) If your pet is with you
- 2) If your pet was separated from you during the disaster.

## Videos

- [Preparing Makes Sense for Pet Owners](#): - FEMA's suggestions for proactive pet emergency preparedness.
- [How to Prepare a Pet for a disaster](#): From the humane society, this kid friendly video provides a 10 item checklist of items to have in a pet disaster kit.

- [How I set up my dog's bug out bag](#): A very detailed and extensive list of items that could be contained in a pet's emergency bag.
- [Prepare Your Pets for a Disaster](#): This provides a list of supplies that you should have on hand to protect your pet. This video also suggests actions you should now to prepare for a potential disaster in the future, and provides an overview of what to do if a disaster strikes.
- [Do you have a pet poison protection kit?](#) Details the materials you should have in a first aid kit for pets.

## Downloaded Resources

- [Preparing pets for Emergencies Now](#): FEMA's guide to planning and preparing for emergencies.
- [DIY Pet First Aid Kit](#): The ASPCA's list of the items that need to be included in a first aid kit for your pets.
- [Emergency Preparedness & Pets](#): A guide for pet owners - From the County of Los Angeles, a comprehensive guide to preparing, planning, and recovering from emergencies.
- [Animal Disaster Preparedness Essentials](#) - Details on putting together your disaster plan, and your pet kit.
- [Animal Disaster Preparedness Essentials](#) - Details on putting together your disaster plan, and your pet kit - Spanish Version

## Downloadable and Adaptable Materials (not PDF)

- [Pet Disaster Preparedness](#): Section 5 of this website from Red Rover contains information on what should go in a disaster kit for specific kinds of animals
- [Sheltering in Place with Your Dog During a Natural Disaster](#): Provides detailed advice on how to take care of your dog, or other pet, when sheltering in your home during a natural disaster.
- [Pet Safety in Emergencies](#): Provides ample details on how to plan for before, during, and after an emergency. This site also provides links for resources to find pet friendly places where your dog can stay in the event of an evacuation, how to shelter in place with a pet, and how to stay healthy during a disaster.

## Fillable Forms

- [Emergency Preparedness Forms for your Pet](#): The forms begin on page 19 of the recommended resource. The provided forms contain information on vital contacts for your pet, evacuation sites, and the feeding and medication schedule.
- [Pet Boarding Instructions](#): This form has instructions on what information would be needed if you are boarding your pet.
- [Missing Pet Flyer](#): Template for a flyer in the event that your pet goes missing.

## Available free pamphlets/materials

- [Prepare for Emergencies Now: Information for Pet Owners](#): Get Ready Now brochure available in a variety of languages. A unique brochure containing information for pet owners and suggestions for proactive pet emergency preparedness.
- [Pet Safety Pack](#): Site to order a pet safety pack. In your safety pack, you'll find a pet rescue window decal to help alert rescue personnel that pets are inside your home in the event of an emergency. You'll also find an ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) magnet, so you can keep APCC's information handy should you need to call them about your pet.

## Possible subtopics

- Specific disasters that threaten your community, and how to best prepare for them.
- Specific types of animals you would need to care for in the event of an emergency.
- Brainstorming local resources to assist in the planning of a pet emergency plan, and to help pets during an emergency.
- Developing buddy systems for checking on animals in case members of the community are out of town.
- Who the most vulnerable members of the community would be in the case of a disaster, and how other community members could help them to care for their pets in the event of a disaster.

## Possible Class Handouts

- [Emergency Preparedness and Pets: A Guide for Pet Owners](#): This document was developed for LA county, and this provides an excellent summary of all relevant information and is a highly useful handout.
- [Pet Disaster Kit Checklist](#): A detailed list of all materials that should go into a pet disaster kit.

## Suggested Group Activities

- Write out your pet emergency preparedness plan, considering all the scenarios discussed. How would this plan vary if you needed to shelter in place vs. evacuate with your pet? How would this plan need to be modified depending on the type of pet you are helping? How would this plan be modified depending on the type of disaster? How would your pet be helped during a disaster if you were not home?
- List all the items you would need to have in your pet disaster preparedness kit, and review with your group.

## List of plausible participant behavioral changes

- Participants will come away from the class with a detailed plan for how to care for their pet in the event of an emergency. They will have considered the various scenarios they may be presented with, and know how to address each scenario, so they will not be

panicked or caught off guard in the event an emergency does occur. They will be empowered to inform their family and community members of what needs to be considered in preparation for an emergency, and what will need to be done during an emergency.

- Participants will know what they need for a pet emergency kit, and after the class will obtain and store these items.

## Related Apps

- [American Red Cross Pet First Aid Mobile App](#): Veterinary advice for everyday emergencies, with videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice.
- [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(ASPCA\) Mobile App](#): Disaster preparedness and pet survival tips, a tool to store and manage your pet's vital information, practical tips and a customizable kit for recovering lost pets.
- [Nextdoor App](#): Community members share updates using this app. Excellent resource on pending emergencies, community response, and what resources are needed or available:
- [FEMA app](#): Real time alerts, Emergency Safety Tips, Emergency Shelters, Disaster Recovery Centers.
- [Bring Fido](#): Helps you locate pet friendly hotels
- [Animal Poison Control Center Mobile App](#): The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (ASPCA) Poison Control Center offers this handy reference tool.
- [PetCoach Forum](#): Allows you to ask questions and obtain answers from our handpicked selection of vets, trainers and other pet experts.
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## Attachment A: Pet Safety in Emergencies

Emergencies come in many forms: fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, violent storms and even terrorism. In the event of [extreme weather or a disaster](#), would you know what to do to protect your pet? Leaving pets out of evacuation plans can put pets, pet owners, and first responders in danger. Even if you try to create a safe place for them, pets left behind during a disaster are likely to be injured, lost, or worse. Be prepared: make a plan and prepare a disaster kit for your pet.

Before an Emergency

Find Pet-Friendly Hotels

- [bringfido.comexternal icon](#) or call 877-411-FIDO
- [dogfriendly.comexternal icon](#) or call 888-281-5170
- [doginmysuitcase.comexternal icon](#) or call 8880254-0637
- [pet-friendly-hotels.netexternal icon](#) or call 866-966-3046

- [pets-allowed-hotels.com](http://pets-allowed-hotels.com) or call 800-250-1625
- [petswelcome.com](http://petswelcome.com)
- [tripswithpets.com](http://tripswithpets.com)

To get started, familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that could affect your area and consider your options for providing care for your pet(s).

Disasters can happen without warning, so be prepared:

- Make sure your pet(s) wear collars and tags with up-to-date contact information and other identification.
- Microchip your pet(s) – this is one of the best ways to ensure that you and your pet are reunited if you are separated. Always be sure to register the microchip with the manufacturer and keep your contact information up to date with the microchip company.
- Keep a leash and/or carrier near the exit.
- Make sure you have proper equipment for pets to ride in the car (carriers, harnesses, pet seatbelts).
- Prepare a [Pet Disaster Kit](#) so evacuation will go smoothly for your entire family. Ask your veterinarian for help in putting together your pet's veterinary records.

Make a Plan

- Plan where you and your pet will stay in case you need to evacuate your home. Pets may not be allowed in local shelters, unless they are service animals. Many disaster evacuation centers (such as Red Cross evacuation centers) do not accept pets and other animals.
  - Identify shelters or out-of-town friends or relatives where your pets and other animals can stay.
  - Locate boarding facilities or animal hospitals near your evacuation shelter and in the case you are unable to return home right away.
- Create a buddy system in case you're not home during an emergency. Ask a trusted neighbor who can check on your animals and can evacuate your animals if necessary.
- Locate a veterinarian or animal hospital in the area where you may be seeking temporary shelter and add the veterinarian's contact information to your emergency kit. Create an emergency kit for your pet



Prepare an [emergency kit](#) for your pet ahead of time.

- Purchase a pet carrier for each of your pets (write your pet's name, your name, and contact information on each carrier).
- Food and water for at least 2 weeks for each pet
- For cats: litter box and litter
- For dogs: plastic bags for poop
- Medications for at least 2 weeks
- Medical records, including record of vaccination for rabies and other diseases, prescription medications, and medical history.
- Sturdy leashes or harnesses
- Microchip number
- Contact information (cell phone, work phone, home phone) of owner and close relative or friends

Practice evacuating your pet

- Train your pets to be in their carriers by making it a comfortable place.
- Practice transporting your pet by taking them for rides in a vehicle similar to one you would be evacuating in. If you do not have a car, make arrangements with neighbors, family, and friends. You can also contact your local government to learn about transportation options during a disaster.
- Know where your pet might hide when stressed or scared. Practice catching your pet, if needed.
- For cats, you can practice removing your cat from his/her hiding spot and using your cat's carrier, a pillowcase, a sturdy box — anything to get your cat quickly out of harm's way.
- Have your entire family practice evacuating with your pets so everyone knows what to take, where to find the pets, and where to meet.

### **Local Animal Shelters**

Search for local shelters and rescue groups on [Petfinder's Shelter Center](#)[external icon](#). Local animal shelters may be able to offer advice on what to do with your pets if you are asked to evacuate your home. **In Monterey County, the SPCA monitors shelters and provides shelter for pets.**

## Local Government

Local government animal control or service agencies can provide guidance on how to protect your pets in an emergency.

## Relief Organizations

RedRover shelters and cares for animals displaced by natural disasters and other crises in the United States and Canada. If you need sheltering assistance, please call RedRover at (800) 440-3277 or visit [RedRover.org](https://www.redrover.org)<sup>external icon</sup>.

### Sheltering during an evacuation

- Remember, during a disaster, what is good for you is good for your pet. If you leave your pets behind, they may be lost, injured – or worse. Never leave a pet chained outdoors.
- Contact your local emergency management office and ask if they offer accommodations for owners and their pets. If accommodations are needed for your pet(s):
  - Contact local veterinary clinics, boarding facilities, local animal shelters, family or friends outside the evacuation area, or a pet-friendly hotel, particularly along evacuation routes.
  - Visit [the Humane Society website](#)<sup>external icon</sup><sup>external icon</sup> to find a shelter in your area.
- Remember to take your pet's emergency kit with you.
- [Learn what to expect](#) if you take your pet to an evacuation center.

### Sheltering in place

When sheltering at home with your pet, make sure the room chosen is pet-friendly in the following ways:

- Select a safe room, preferably an interior room with no (or few) windows.
- Remove any toxic chemicals or plants.
- Close off small areas where frightened cats could get stuck in (such as vents or beneath heavy furniture).

Diseases that can spread between pets and people during a natural disaster

Natural disasters can contribute to the transmission of some [diseases](#). Exposure to inclement weather conditions, stagnant water, wildlife or unfamiliar animals, and overcrowding can put your pet at risk for getting sick. Some of these

illnesses can be transmitted between pets and people (also known as zoonotic diseases or zoonoses). Some common disaster-related diseases that pets can pass to people are the following: rabies, leptospirosis, and diseases spread by mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks.

### How to Keep Yourself and Your Pets Healthy During a Disaster

- Wash your hands after handling your pet, its food, or its waste.
- Do not let your pet lick your face or hands.
- Keep your pet up-to-date on all vaccinations and heartworm, flea, and tick preventatives.
- Practice safe handling of your pet, because your pet may behave differently during a stressful situation.
- Keep your pet in a carrier or on a leash.
- Do not allow your pet to interact with other animals, especially wildlife and stray animals.
- Report any bite wounds to medical personnel immediately.
- Properly clean and disinfect cages and litterboxes. Wash your pet's bedding regularly.
- Avoid stagnant water, especially after flooding occurring after natural disasters.
- Don't allow pets to play in or drink contaminated water.

### After an Emergency

After an emergency, familiar scents and landmarks may have changed. Pets can become confused and lost, so it's important to keep pets on leash or in a carrier when they're being transported or when you go outside. Some hazards to be aware of for pets and people include snakes and other wildlife, especially after flooding, and downed power lines.

### Returning home

- Check your home for sharp objects, spilled chemicals, and exposed wiring to protect your family and your pets from injury.
- The behavior of animals may change dramatically after a flood, flash flood, thunderstorm, or hurricane. Normally quiet and friendly animals may become irritable.
- Monitor animals closely and only release them in a safe and secure environment.

- Contact a veterinarian if you notice any signs of stress, discomfort, or illness in your pets.

#### Finding a lost pet

- Make sure that your family is in a safe location before you begin your search.
- If you are in a shelter that houses pets, inform one of the pet caretakers. Give the pet caretaker a missing pet flyer.
- Many shelters and organizations will house pets lost during disasters. Contact your local humane society, animal welfare organization, or county or state animal response team to find the shelters or organizations near you. .  
The [National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalitionexternal icon](#) may also be able to help find the right local response organization.
- In addition to shelters and rescue organizations, you can contact local animal control about your lost pet and post missing pet flyers in the area once conditions are safe.
- If your pet has a microchip, call the microchip company to let them know your pet is missing and make sure all the information about your pet including your current contact information is updated and current.

#### Pet first aid

- Emergency treatment and first aid for pets should never be used as a substitute for veterinary care. But, it may save your pet's life before you can get your pet to a veterinarian.
- The [American Veterinary Medical Associationexternal icon](#) offers specific advice for basic first aid in the case of poisoning, seizures, fractures, external and internal bleeding, burns, choking, heatstroke, and what to do if your pet has no heartbeat or is not breathing. Tips for handling injured pets
- Never assume that even the gentlest pet will not bite or scratch if injured.
- Pain and fear can make animals unpredictable or even dangerous.
- Don't attempt to hug an injured pet, and always keep your face away from its mouth, which might scare the animal more or cause them pain.
- Perform any contact with your pet slowly and gently.
- Stop if your animal becomes more agitated or stressed.
- Try to get your pet to a veterinarian as quickly as possible without risking injury or illness to yourself or your family.

## Resources

- **CDC**
- [Pets in Evacuation Centers](#)
- [Pet Project: 5 Ways to Prep Your Pet for Emergencies](#)
- [Keep your pets safe in an emergency: 5 things to know](#)
- [Pet Disaster Preparedness Kit](#)
- [Pet Boarding Instructions pdf icon](#)[PDF – 2 pages]
- [Missing Pet Flyer Template word icon](#)[Doc – 1 page]
- [Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters](#)
- [Ready Wrigley](#)
- **American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)**  
AMVA offers a variety of resources to assist veterinarians, animal owners, and others interested in the well-being of animals to prepare for animal safety in the event of a disaster. Visit AVMA's [Disaster Preparedness Siteexternal icon](#)
- **RedRover**  
Through its volunteer-driven RedRover Responders (formerly the Emergency Animal Rescue Service or EARS), RedRover shelters and cares for animals displaced by natural disasters and other crises in the United States and Canada. If you need sheltering assistance, please call RedRover at (800) 440-3277. Visit [redrover.orgexternal icon](#).
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
FEMA is the federal agency that leads the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. Visit ready gov: [Caring for Animalsexternal icon](#)
- [Humane Society of the United States: Making a disaster plan for petexternal icon](#)

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) , [National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\)](#)

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# PET DISASTER KIT CHECKLIST

## DOCUMENTS

- Photocopied veterinary records
  - Rabies certificate
  - Vaccinations
  - Medical summary
  - Prescriptions for medications
  - Most recent heartworm test result (dogs).
- Photocopied registration information (ex: proof of ownership or adoption records)
- Pet description(s) (ex: breed, sex, color, weight)
- Recent photographs for each of your pets
- Waterproof container for documents
- Microchip information (ex: microchip number, name and number of the microchip company)
- Your contact information (phone numbers and addresses for your family and friends or relatives you may be staying with)

## WATER, FOOD, MEDICATIONS

- 2-week supply of food for each animal stored in waterproof containers
- Manual can opener
- Medication instructions (if applicable)
- 2-week supply of water for each animal
- Feeding instructions for each animal
- One month supply of flea, tick, and heartworm preventative
- Non-spill food and water dishes
- 2-week supply of any medications (if applicable)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Leash, collar with ID, and harness
- Appropriate-sized pet carrier with bedding, blanket, or towel
- Cleaning supplies for accidents (paper towels, plastic bags, disinfectant)
- Toys
- Pet first aid book and first aid kit

