

Be Emergency Ready

Don't forget your pet!

Animals, like every other member of your family, deserve the protection and security of emergency preparation. Those who take time to prepare themselves and their pets will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry.

Before an emergency

Before an emergency occurs, contact motels and hotels in communities outside of your area to find out if they will accept pets in an emergency. If you have made plans to evacuate to the home of a friend or family member, ask if you can bring your pets. It is also a good idea to ask your veterinarian if he/she will take your pets in an emergency.

Most kennels require proof of current rabies and distemper shots to accept pets. Keep these papers with the other documents you would carry if you need to evacuate.

You may also want to create a pet emergency supply kit that includes:

- **Food and water**
A seven day supply of food and drinking water in an airtight, waterproof container.
- **Current photos of you and your pet**
If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you with your pet will help you document ownership and enable others to help you identify your pet. Include information about species, breed, age, sex, colour and distinguishing characteristics.
- **Important documents**
Have up-to-date identification including an additional tag with the phone number of someone out of the evacuation area in the event the pet becomes lost.
- **Medications, medical record**
Keep an extra supply of the medicines your pet takes in a waterproof container.
- **First aid kit**
Most kits should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors, antibiotic ointment, flea and tick prevention, latex gloves, an alcohol solution and a pet first aid reference book.
- **Collar/harness, ID Tag and leash**
Your pet should wear a collar with its rabies tag and identification at all times. Include a back-up leash, collar and ID tag in your pet's emergency supply kit.
- **Crate or other pet carrier**
If you need to evacuate in an emergency situation, take your pet and animals with you in a carrier with blankets or towels for bedding and warmth. Carriers should be large enough to comfortably house your pet for several hours or even days. Familiar items should be included as they can help reduce stress for your pet.
- **Important documents**
Include pet litter, a litter box, paper towels, plastic trash bags and a container of household bleach to provide for pet sanitation.

Special travel considerations for birds

- Birds should be transported in a secure travel crate or carrier.
- In cold weather, make certain you have a blanket over your pet's cage. This may help to reduce the stress of traveling.
- In warm weather, carry a spray bottle to periodically moisten your bird's feathers.
- Have recent photos available and keep your bird's leg bands on for identification.
- If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels that you can change frequently.
- Keep the carrier in as quiet an area as possible.
- It is imperative that birds eat on a daily basis so purchase a timed feeder. If you need to leave your bird unexpectedly, the feeder will ensure its daily feeding schedule.
- Items to keep on hand: catch net, heavy towel, blanket or sheet to cover the cage and a cage liner.

Special travel considerations for small animals

- Small animals such as hamsters, gerbils, mice and guinea pigs should be transported in secure carriers. Be sure to bring bedding materials, food and food bowls.
- Items to keep on hand: salt lick, an extra water bottle, a small box or tube for the pet to hide in and a week's worth of bedding.

During an emergency, bring your pets inside immediately. Remember that animals sometimes sense severe weather changes and might run away to hide.

If you must evacuate, take your pets, activate your emergency plan and bring your emergency supply kit. Separate pets for their safety.

After an emergency

Your pet's behavior may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch your animals closely.

In the first few days after the event, leash your pets when they go outside and always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may get confused or lost.

Wild animals may have been brought into the area by flooding. Stress can make wild animals dangerous. Downed power lines are also a hazard for pets.

For more help in managing your pet's behaviour during this transition time, you can contact your veterinarian or your local humane society.