



## Animal & Pet Preparedness

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**Animals and Pets** are often an important part of people's lives. If you are like many animal owners in America, your pet is an important member of your family. The likelihood that you and your animals will survive emergencies or disasters such as a fire, earthquake, flood, tornado or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning. Because animals can influence a person's decision to take protective actions, it is important to understand how to manage animals in emergencies.

- The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 requires state and local emergency plans to address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals

### **Animal issues are important in emergency planning:**

- Animal issues can impact public health and safety
- Protecting animals in emergencies involves a public and private coordinated effort
- The average household is estimated to have 1.2 pets, excluding wild or exotic pets
- Treating domesticated/rescued animals may spread zoonotic diseases if personnel are not properly protected
- Decontaminating animals is difficult to manage if community plans and necessary resources are lacking
- When disasters occur, animals may remain untended for weeks (not evacuated) or placed in a secure facility
- Often the disaster results in substantial debris, contaminated food or water supplies, downed fences and damaged structures, with abandoned animals facing significant hazards after the event

If emergencies or disasters force you to evacuate your home, take your pets with you if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Make plans for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

Have back-up emergency plans in case you cannot get home to care for your animal. Arrange for a neighbor who is frequently at home to evacuate your pets if an evacuation order is issued. Keep at least a three day supply of your pet's food, medicines, leash, veterinary records and other necessities in a pet carrier that's ready to go.

**Animal Emergency Supply Kits:** To prepare, assemble animal emergency supply kits and develop a pet-care plan that will work for any emergency. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans for your pets. Keep in mind that what is best for you is typically best for your animals. Create Animal Emergency Supply Kits for each pet for at least three day. Kits should include:

- Pet identification securely attached
- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container)
  - First aid kit
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals cannot escape
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Three days food supply (one ounce/per pound each day)
  - Potable water
  - Bowls
  - Cat litter/pan
  - Can opener
- Pet towel
- Plastic bags for waste
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable

In the event of evacuation, do not leave pets behind. Secure a place for them. For animals you do not evacuate, make dry food and plenty of water available for them.

### **Information for Livestock Owners**

If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before emergencies and disasters.

#### **Livestock Preparation Guidelines:**

- Ensure all animals have some form of identification that will help facilitate their return.
- Evacuate animals whenever possible
  - Make arrangements for evacuation, including routes and host sites, should be made in advance
  - Alternate routes should be mapped out in case the planned route is inaccessible
- Evacuation sites should have or be able to readily obtain food, water, veterinary care, handling equipment and facilities
- Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal
  - Make available experienced handlers and drivers
  - Note: It is best to allow animals a chance to become accustomed to vehicular travel so they are less frightened and easier to move
- If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to move large animals to available shelter or turn them outside
  - This decision should be determined based on the type of disaster and the soundness and location of the shelter (structure)

#### **Cold Weather Guidelines:**

When temperatures plunge below zero, livestock producers need to give extra attention to their animals. Prevention is the key to dealing with hypothermia, frostbite and other cold weather injuries in livestock.

Make sure your livestock have the following help prevent cold-weather maladies:

- Shelter
- Plenty of dry bedding to insulate vulnerable udders, genitals and legs from the frozen ground and frigid winds
- Windbreaks to keep animals safe from frigid conditions
- Plenty of food and water

Also, take extra time to observe livestock, looking for early signs of disease and injury.

- Severe cold-weather injuries or death primarily occur in the very young or in animals that are already debilitated
- Cases of cold weather-related sudden death in calves often result when cattle are suffering from undetected infection, particularly pneumonia
- Sudden, unexplained livestock deaths and illnesses should be investigated quickly so that a cause can be identified and steps can be taken to protect remaining animals

Animals suffering from frostbite don't exhibit pain. It may be up to two weeks before the injury becomes evident as freeze-damaged tissue starts to slough away. At that point, the injury should be treated as an open wound and a veterinarian should be consulted.

#### **Information Sources:**

[www.eden.lsu.edu](http://www.eden.lsu.edu); [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov); [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov); [www.emc.orln.gov](http://www.emc.orln.gov)