

If You Have a Pet, Advanced Evacuation Planning Is Key When Preparing for a Hurricane or Other Disaster

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INSURANCE INFORMATION INSTITUTE

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NEW YORK, April 13, 2010 ? All too often when disaster strikes pets are left to fend for themselves and end up lost, injured or are even killed. Making your pets a part of your family disaster preparedness plan is an essential step toward ensuring their safety, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.).

"Planning for a disaster is the best way to survive one. In addition to keeping your insurance up-to-date and having important papers ready to go, if you are a pet owner, you should make plans for your animal friends when creating an evacuation plan," said Jeanne Salvatore, senior vice president and consumer spokesperson for the I.I.I. "In a disaster, no one should have to decide between their life and that of a beloved pet."

The I.I.I. offers the following tips for protecting your pets during a disaster.

Find a Safe Place Ahead of Time

Most of the public shelters that are set up for disaster victims will not accept animals other than service animals, so make sure you have lined up somewhere for your pet to stay.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check their policies on accepting pets.
- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians outside your area that might be able to shelter your pets in an emergency. Include emergency phone numbers.
- Ask your local humane society or emergency management agency for information regarding community disaster response plans that include pets. In the event you are not home when disaster strikes, make advance arrangements to have a friend or neighbor pick up your pets and meet you at a specified location.

Make a Disaster Kit for Your Pets

Just as you have a disaster kit for your family, you should prepare a similar kit for your pets containing:

- Medication and medical records (including proof of rabies vaccination) in a waterproof container.
- Leashes, harnesses and carriers for transporting pets.
- A muzzle, if your pet requires one.
- Food and water for three days; a manual can opener.
- Cat litter and litter box.
- Current photo and description of your pet in case you become separated.
- Name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- If you have pet insurance, the insurance company contact information and policy number.

If You Evacuate, Take Your Pets

- Be prepared to leave early; don't wait for an official evacuation as you might be ordered to leave your pets behind.
- Keep pets on leashes or in carriers at all times.
- Make sure your pet is wearing up-to-date identification. Include the phone number of a friend or relative outside your area in case your pet gets lost and you cannot be reached.
- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the bird's feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport; instead provide a few slices of fresh fruit or vegetables with high water content.

After the Disaster

- Once you return to your home, don't allow your pets to roam loose right away. While you assess the damage, keep dogs on a leash and other animals in their carriers.
- Familiar landmarks and smells might be gone, and your pet may become disoriented. Pets can easily get lost in such situations, so give them some time to get used to their ?new? surroundings.
- Be patient. Try to get your pets back into their normal routines as soon as possible, and be on the lookout for stress-related behavioral problems; if these persist, talk to your veterinarian.

To learn more about protecting your pets during a disaster, visit the Humane Society of the United States; the American Red Cross; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For related videos and podcasts, go to [Evacuation: The Ten Minute Challenge](#) and [Evacuation \(Podcast\)](#).

The I.I.I. is a nonprofit, communications organization supported by the insurance industry.

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