

# Disaster Preparedness for Animal Owners

Earthquakes, floods, wildfires, hazardous material spills—man-made or natural disasters can strike anytime, anywhere. Put a preparedness plan in place now to keep you and your animals safe.

## If You Evacuate, Take Your Animals

Pets are not better off at home. If it isn't safe for you, it's not safe for them. Animals left at home during a disaster or emergency can easily become injured, lost or killed. Never leave your dog tied or chained outside; it could become a victim of exposure, starvation, predators, or rising water.

If you think you might need to evacuate, bring your pets into the house and confine them so you can leave with them quickly. Make sure your disaster supplies are packed and ready to go, including your pet emergency kit. You will need sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport your pets safely. A carrier should be large enough for an animal to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down as your pet may have to stay in it for hours at a time.

It may not always be possible to evacuate horses or livestock, but having a plan in place for a potential evacuation is important. Keep halters and leads ready. Have a trailering and transportation plan in place.

## In Case You're Not Home

An evacuation order may come, or a disaster may strike, when you're at work or out of the house. Make arrangements well in advance for a trusted neighbor to care for or evacuate with your animals, if possible.

## Make Sure Your Animals Have ID

For pets, a collar with an ID tag is a must. On the tag, in addition to your phone number, you may want to include the phone number of a friend or relative outside of your area. Also consider microchipping and/or tattooing. Severe weather can lead to fencing failures, allowing horses and livestock to leave your property. ID, such as microchipping, will be key to their return.

## Find a Safe Place in Advance

While the PETS Act requires government emergency plans to include contingencies for household pets, some evacuation shelters will not be able to accommodate pets other than service animals. Plan ahead and find an animal-friendly place such as a friend, boarding kennel, veterinary facility, hotel or motel. Call for a reservation



at the facility as soon as you think you might have to evacuate. Keep proof of current vaccinations and your pet's medical records in your emergency kit.

## If You Don't Evacuate

If your family and pets must wait out a storm or other disaster at home, identify a safe area for you and your pets to take shelter. Prepare a portable first aid kit, as well as several days' supply of pet food, water, hay, feed and medications. Consider alternative methods of getting water for your animals, as water supplies can become contaminated. Perches, ledges and access to high ground can be a lifesaver for poultry, livestock and other animals in an emergency.

## When You Return Home

Don't allow your pets to roam loose. Familiar sights and smells might be gone, which could cause your pets to become disoriented and lost. Comfort your pet. In the event of an emergency, your pet will probably be just as frightened as you. Give it attention and affection, but don't force it. Let your pet come to you. If behavior issues appear or worsen, consult with your veterinarian. Just as people can be traumatized by emergency situations, so can animals.

## Don't hope. Plan.

For more disaster preparedness tips, visit [oregonvma.org](http://oregonvma.org).

