

# Pet Safety in Emergencies








From CDC website:

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fhealthy-pets%2Fpet-safety-in-emergencies.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fhealthy-pets%2Fpet-safety-in-emergencies.html)

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.com](#) or call 877-411-FIDO
- [dogfriendly.com](#) or call 888-281-5170
- [doginmysuitcase.com](#) or call 8880254-0637
- [pet-friendly-hotels.net](#) or call 866-966-3046
- [pets-allowed-hotels.com](#) or call 800-250-1625
- [petswelcome.com](#)
- [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.

## PET DISASTER KIT CHECKLIST

### DOCUMENTS

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopied veterinary records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rabies certificate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vaccinations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical summary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prescriptions for medications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Most recent heartworm test result (dogs).</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopied registration information (ex: proof of ownership or adoption records)                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Microchip information (ex: microchip number, name and number of the microchip company) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet description(s) (ex: breed, sex, color, weight)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Your contact information (phone numbers and addresses for your family and friends or relatives you may be staying with) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recent photographs for each of your pets  |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof container for documents  |  |   |

### WATER, FOOD, MEDICATIONS

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

### OTHER SUPPLIES

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash, collar with ID, and harness | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate-sized pet carrier with bedding, blanket, or towel | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning supplies for accidents (paper towels, plastic bags, disinfectant) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toys                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet first aid book and first aid 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.

## **During an Emergency**

If you don't have a plan and need information quickly in an emergency, contact:

### **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.

### **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](#)external icon.

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 websiteexternal iconexternal icon](#) 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.

- [Rabies](#) is a virus that affects the nervous system in both animals and people. Rabies is transmitted through bites from rabid animals or through contact with their saliva. To protect you and your pet: Report any bite wounds to medical personnel immediately. Practice safe handling of pets in a stressful situation. Keep your pet in a carrier or on a leash. Do not allow your pet to interact with other animals
- [Leptospirosis](#) is a bacterial disease found in the urine of infected animals that can cause kidney damage and affect other organs. It is transmitted through contact with infected urine or contaminated water, soil, and food. Wash your hands after coming in contact with urine. Avoid stagnant water, especially after flooding occurring after natural disasters. Don't allow pets to play in or drink contaminated water.
- **Diseases spread by mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks:** Mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks are common pests of stray animals and can be a problem immediately following a disaster situation. Their bites irritate the skin and may also spread a variety of diseases ([Lyme disease](#), [West Nile virus](#)) harmful to both people and animals. To help prevent illnesses associated with mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks: Keep your pet away from wildlife and stray animals. Talk to

your veterinarian about the use of a regular preventative treatment for fleas, ticks, and parasites for your pet.



### 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 Coalition](#)external 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 Association](#)external 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 Site](#) external 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.org](#) external 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 Animals](#) external icon
- [Humane Society of the United States: Making a disaster plan for pets](#) external icon