

- For a few days, keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers inside the house. If your house is damaged, they could escape and become lost or injured.
- Be patient with your pets after a disaster. Try to get them back into their normal routines as soon as possible, and be ready for behavioral problems that may result from the stress of the situation. If behavioral problems persist, talk to your veterinarian.

### CARING FOR BIRDS IN AN EMERGENCY

- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier.
- In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside.
- During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically.
- Do not put water inside the carrier during transport.
- Provide a few slices of fresh fruit and vegetables with high water content.
- Have a photo and leg bands for identification.
- Keep the carrier in a quiet area.
- Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

### REPTILES

- Snakes can be transported in a pillow case but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site.
- If your snakes require frequent feeding, carry food with you.
- Take a water bowl large enough for soaking the entire snake and it can serve as a heating pad as well.
- When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

### POCKET PETS

- Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered.
- Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.



### Animal Services Program

DC Department of Health (DC Health)  
(202) 535-2323

**DC Animal Care and Control (24 hours a day)**  
(202) 576-6664

### Rabies Concerns?

For questions or concerns about rabies in the District of Columbia, please email [rabies.info@dc.gov](mailto:rabies.info@dc.gov)

### DC Health Website

#### Rabies and Animal Exposures:

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/rabies-and-animal-exposures> and

#### Zoonotic Diseases:

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/zoonotic-diseases>

*Information for this guide was provided by:*

#### The Humane Society of the United States,

2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

<http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal-rescue/tips/pet-disaster-preparedness-kit.html>

#### Homeland Security and Emergency Management

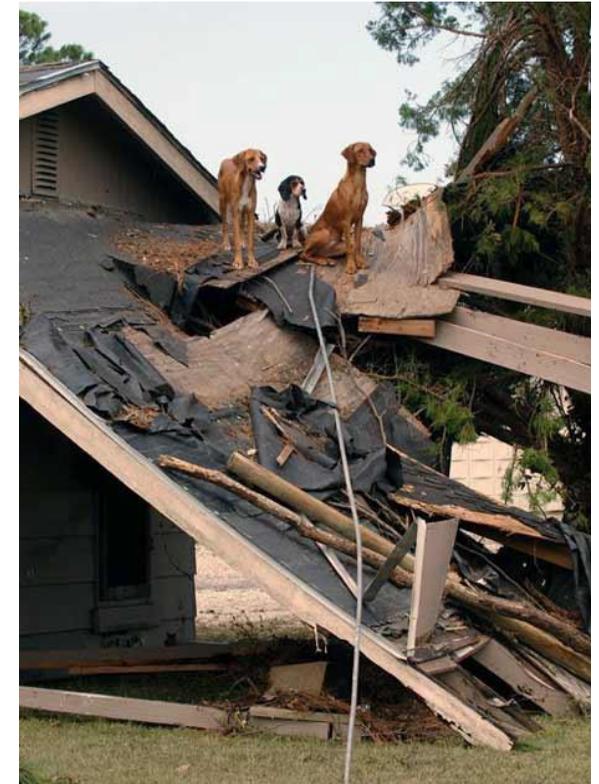
**Agency**, 2720 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032, or visit [www.dccema.dc.gov](http://www.dccema.dc.gov)

**DC Health**, 899 North Capitol St, NE, Washington,

DC 20002, or visit <http://dchealth.dc.gov> and

<http://dchealth.dc.gov/page/pet-sheltering>

## Pets and Disasters Preparedness Guide



Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. Here's how you can be prepared to protect your pets when disaster strikes.

### BE PREPARED WITH A DISASTER PLAN

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. **If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets.** Preparation ahead of time can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. But whether the disaster is a hurricane or a hazardous spill, you may have to evacuate your home and that includes taking your pet(s) with you. If it's not safe for you to stay in the disaster area, it's not safe for your pets.

### IF YOU EVACUATE, TAKE YOUR PETS

In the event of a disaster that requires evacuation, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or killed. Prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home unexpectedly.

### HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO TAKE YOUR PETS

Because some shelters don't accept pets, except for service animals, you must plan ahead to ensure that your family and pets will have a safe place to stay.

#### Don't wait until disaster strikes to do your research:

- Listen to directives given by local government officials. In many cases, they may be able to tell you where you can shelter your pet. Local schools may be utilized to house your family and your pet.
- Find out which hotels and motels outside your immediate area will accept pets during disasters. Ask about any restrictions on number, size, and species. Keep a list of pet-friendly places and keep it handy.

- Check with friends, relatives, or others outside your immediate area. Ask if they would be able to shelter you and your animals or your animals alone, if necessary.
- Make a list of which veterinary offices and boarding facilities might be able to shelter animals in emergencies.

### CREATE A PORTABLE SURVIVAL KIT FOR YOUR PET

Each person has a responsibility for his or her pet(s) and must have a plan to evacuate with his or her pet(s).

Create a survival kit for your pet that includes:

#### Identification collar and rabies tag.

Make sure it is securely fastened and has up-to-date identification. It is a good idea to attach the phone number and address of where you will be staying during the evacuation.

**Animal Carrier or cage and leash.** Keep in mind that your animal may have to be in the carrier or cage for hours at a time so you may need blankets or towels for bedding and warmth.

**Medications and veterinary records stored in a waterproof container.** Be sure to check the expiration dates for all medicines. Veterinary records are necessary because most animal shelters do not allow pets without proof of vaccination!

#### Newspapers and plastic trashbags for handling waste.

At least a **two-week supply of food, water and food**, stored in an airtight, waterproof container.

**Other useful items** include paper towels, grooming items, and household cleaners.

### IF YOU DON'T EVACUATE

- If your family and pets must wait out a storm or other disaster at home, identify a safe area of your home where you can all stay together.
- Keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers, and make sure they are wearing identification.



- Have any medications and a supply of pet food and water inside watertight containers, along with your other emergency supplies.

### AS THE DISASTER APPROACHES

- Don't wait until the last minute to get ready. Warnings for some disasters may be issued hours, or even days, in advance.
- Bring pets into the house and confine them so you can leave with them quickly if necessary. Make sure each pet and pet carrier or cage has up-to-date information about your temporary shelter location.
- Make sure your disaster supplies are ready to go, including your pet's survival kit.

### 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 take your pet(s) and meet you at a specified location. Be sure that the person is comfortable with your pets, knows where your animals are likely to be, knows where your disaster supplies are kept, and has a key to your home.
- If you use a pet-sitting service, it may be able to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

### AFTER THE DISASTER

Planning and preparation will help you weather the disaster, but your home may be a very different place afterward, whether you have taken shelter at home or elsewhere. You should take the following additional precautions regarding your pets:

- Don't allow your pets to roam loose. Familiar landmarks and smells might be gone, and your pet will probably be disoriented.