



Emergency Preparedness: Pets

Introduction

Pets often are an important part of people's lives. If you are like many animal owners, 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, 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 U.S. household is estimated to have 1.2 pets, excluding wild or exotic pets.
- Treating domesticated/rescued animals may spread zoonotic (able to be transmitted between humans and animals) diseases if personnel are not properly protected.
- Decontaminating animals is difficult to manage if community plans and necessary resources are lacking.
- If animals aren't evacuated when disasters occur, they may remain untended for weeks or be 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, understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of health safety regulations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only exception. Make plans for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

Have plans in case you cannot get home to care for your animals. Arrange for a neighbor who is frequently at home to take care of your pets or evacuate your pets is issued while you're gone.

Pet Emergency Supply Kits:

To prepare, assemble animal emergency supply kits and develop a pet-care plan that will work whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location. 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 days, carrier that's ready to go.

Kits should include:

- Pet identification securely attached and current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Medications, first-aid kit and veterinary records (stored in a waterproof container.)
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals cannot escape.
- Three days' food supply (one ounce/per pound each day), potable water, bowls, can opener if canned food.
- Pet towel or blanket; pet beds and toys if easily transportable.



- 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.

In the event of evacuation, do not leave pets behind. However, if it's impossible to take them, make sure plenty of dry food and water are available.

Information Sources:

www.extensiondisaster.net ,www.fema.gov,
www.ready.gov

*Reviewed by Daniel L. Goerlich, Associate Director
Economy Community and Food, Virginia Cooperative
Extension, Virginia Tech*

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.