

Before an Emergency

You, the pet owner, are responsible for your pet(s), even in an emergency. This brochure provides guidance to assist you with preparing for the safety of your pets.

- Develop a plan for your pets in case of a disaster and make sure everyone in the family understands it. Share the plan – and exchange house keys – with a dependable friend or neighbor so that you can back each other up should a disaster occur when you're away from your home and your pets. (Leave all pertinent pet information for them in a pre-designated spot.)
- In the event of a disaster and/or evacuation, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate with them. Make some phone calls ahead of time to determine your options should it ever become necessary to evacuate your home with your pets.
- Ask friends or relatives who live away from affected areas if you and your pets can stay with them during an emergency.
- Check with several motels away from affected areas and ask them if they allow pets, and if so, whether there are additional fees, restrictions on size, species and number of pets allowed. Keep a list of these “pet-friendly” sites, including phone numbers, with your other disaster information and supplies. Hotels/motels **may** have special allowances and relaxed rules during an evacuation event. Check out www.clemson.edu/public/lph/ahp/emgcy_prep/index.html for a list of some pet-friendly hotels and motels.
- Survey boarding kennels and veterinary offices in areas where you may potentially stay if you are evacuated to learn about the requirements needed to board your pets (such as vaccinations and health checks).
- You may be able to locate and stay in a pet-friendly human shelter, or in a human shelter with a pet shelter “co-located” nearby, but do not depend on these options as they may not be available in all areas. Shelters should be considered your last resort as resources there may be limited.
- Also remember that most animal control shelters and humane society shelters will need to prepare for lost and stray pet disaster victims and cannot accommodate your pets.
- Be sure to acquire a pet carrier (portable kennel) or crate for each house pet. A carrier will be required if you and your pet need assistance with transportation or sheltering. They should be large enough to allow the pet to stand up and turn around. To help a pet adjust to the kennel ahead of time you can, initially, separate the kennel top and bottom to make it into a pet's bed. You can also



**South Carolina Association
of Veterinarians**
800.441.SCAV (7228)

www.scav.org



**South Carolina Animal Care
& Control Association**
803.776.7387

www.scacca.org

CLEMSON
LIVESTOCK POULTRY HEALTH

**Clemson University Livestock
Poultry Health Division**
803-788-2260

www.clemson.edu/lph

When Disaster Strikes



Action Guidelines for People with Household Pets

Presented by the:

South Carolina Association of Veterinarians

and

South Carolina Animal Care & Control Association





place food and water in the carrier to entice your pet to go in and out.

- Make sure all pets wear some form of securely fastened, up-to-date identification in case they get lost or separated from you. Secure ID tags to their collars or have your veterinarian implant a microchip for a permanent ID. If needed, you can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag or collar and use an indelible pen to write additional information (such as phone number and address of your usual boarding kennel, or name and number of friend or relative outside the area).
- See that your pets' vaccinations are up to date and keep copies of these records from your veterinarian's office. Most boarding facilities and shelters will require proof of current vaccines., especially rabies vaccine.
- If your pet needs refills of a special diet or medications (including motion sickness pills or sedatives) plan ahead by consulting your veterinarian. Include these medications in your pet supplies kit described below.

Preparing for Evacuation

Bring all pets into the house so you won't have to search for them if you have to leave quickly. Call ahead for your reservations at hotels/motels accepting pets. Contact your destination point ahead of time to notify them of your expected arrival time.

Assemble a pet supplies kit including:

1. Enough pet food and water, and kitty litter, for at least a 3-day supply. Use non-spill water and food bowls. Do not use moist foods – they spoil too rapidly. Water

- should be in sanitized, unbreakable containers.
2. Plenty of cleaner/disinfectants, newspapers, paper towels and plastic bags to properly handle pet waste.
3. Only easily transportable bedding and toys.
4. A sturdy (not cardboard) crate, properly sized, leashes and obedience aids to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
5. Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavioral problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pet.
6. Medications (and medical records) stored in a waterproof container as well as a first aid kit. Include special medications such as motion sickness pills or sedatives, if needed.
7. Current photos of your pet in case he/she gets lost and/or a copy of the microchip ID number or tattoo.

Other Precautions

There are other steps you can take to increase your pets' safety in a disaster, but they are not a substitute for evacuating with your pets.

- If you must leave your pets behind, leave out only dry-type food which will not spoil easily. Water should be left either in bathtubs or in non-spill containers in a large enough quantity to cover your absence – at least 3 days.
- Never leave different animals together that are unfamiliar with one another or are not already used to spending time together in your absence.
- Keep in mind that there may be limited resources equipped to assist with difficult or dangerous animals or exotic species

(such as reptiles). These animals should be left in special crates or cages to reduce the possibility of their getting loose as well as to help if emergency personnel try to relocate them.

- Bring outdoor pets indoors ahead of severe weather if at all possible. If not, consider a location for your pets which will be away from possible flood waters.
- Do not leave pets tied up outside. In a disaster such as a flood, hurricane, or fire they would have no means of escape.
- Leave visible signs on the inside of a window stating that pets are inside the house.
- If the disaster strikes while you are out, employ that "buddy system" that you previously set up with your friend or neighbor. Alert them that your pets are at home and request their help (such as relocating the pets) if needed.

Disasters Are Stressful

- Remember that disaster situations can bring out undesirable behaviors in everyone. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch.
- When you return home, inspect your property for any damaged fencing or dangerous debris before letting your pets back into the yard. Give your pets – and yourself – time to settle back into your normal routines. Consult your veterinarian if any signs of health or behavioral problems arise.



Be prepared!

Advanced planning is essential – it could save the life of your pet and make your life easier in an emergency situation.

Remember: counties may differ in available resources during a disaster.

If you need assistance, check with your Emergency Management Division, local veterinarian, Animal Care and Control Agency, or Humane Society for guidance.