

## **STAYING PREPARED:**

### **Evacuating Your Home with Your Pets in a Disaster**

Disasters can affect your family in many ways. Those disasters will also affect the pets you have in your home. All pets in your home are likely considered part of your family. The best thing you can do is prepare for the worst-case scenario, which would be the need to evacuate the entire family including your pets from your home. There are certain things you can do to prepare your pets for an evacuation. For this article, we are going to refer to cats and dogs.

First and foremost is to arrange for your pets to be housed in a safe haven in the event of an evacuation. Do NOT leave your pets behind to face a situation you would not feel safe in. There are two things for your consideration regarding your pets being evacuated and sheltered. There is good news and not so good news about this. The federal government passed a law; 'The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act) of 2006', which requires local and state emergency preparedness authorities to include in their evacuation plans how they will accommodate household pets and service animals in the event of a major disaster. The not so good news is Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets other than service animals, due to States' health and safety regulations. So, contact your pet's veterinarian for a list of boarding facilities for such disasters requiring evacuation and pet sheltering. Do not wait until a disaster strikes; do it now while you have the time.

Secondly, your pets will need their own 'evacuation-pack' (Evac-Pac) of supplies. With any easy to carry tote (one for each pet), place the following items for use: (from the ASPCA website: [www.aspca.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/) )

- 3 to 7 days worth of canned or dry food (rotate out every two months)
- 7 days worth of bottled water (one bottle for each day, each pet)
- Pet feeding dishes
- Pet first-aid kit (ask your veterinarian what to include), with enough pet medicines for 2 weeks (also rotated out every two month); photocopies of medical records
- Litter/paper toweling
- Disposable aluminum roasting pans as disposable, light-weight litter trays
- Disposable garbage bags for clean-up
- Liquid dish soap and disinfectant
- Extra harness, collars, and leashes
- Traveling bag or carrier for each pet
- Blanket for scooping up and carrying a fearful pet
- Pet's favorite toys
- Recent photos of your pet in case during the evacuation your pet is gets lost

Keep this Pet 'Evac-Pac' next to your family's 'Grab and Go' tote so if you have to evacuate in a hurry, time is not lost looking for both sets. Also, at the first sign of a storm or warning of a disaster bring your pets in doors to prevent them from becoming disoriented and stressed while outside and wander off during the disaster. Remember, family pets are people too.

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On behalf of the 'Preparedness Volunteer Group' of Volunteer Partners