

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY WITH PETS

Include your pets in your emergency plans

It is always best, where possible, to remain at home during a cyclone. If you have pets, bring them inside with you and make them comfortable. You should include a pet grab-and-go kit in your own preparations (see page 2).

Cyclones are stressful for pets as well as people, but you can encourage calm pet behaviour with praise and attention. Close the blinds, put on a radio, and distract pets with games and food. Rather than trying to sooth and comfort obviously scared pets, be cheerful and in control to demonstrate that nothing is wrong.

Remember, animals react differently under stress. Always keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended – even the most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape or even bite or scratch.

Look after your pets early

You should keep a list of “pet friendly” places like kennels, catteries, veterinarians etc. (including 24- hour phone numbers), with other disaster information and supplies. If you are lucky enough to have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.

Alternatively, ask friends, relatives, or others outside the local area to shelter your pets. You will need to move early before travel becomes dangerous. It is important to:

- » Ensure that your pet grab-and-go kit is ready to take at short notice
- » Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing secure collars with up-to-date identification.

Make sure you can be contacted if your animal goes missing

If your pet goes missing during an emergency, the following will help them get back to you:

- » Add an ID tag to your pet's collar that clearly shows your pet's name, your name, and phone number - include a backup tag in your pet grab-and-go kit.
- » Update your animal registration and contact details with council.
- » Update your contact details with your pet's microchipping company, including an alternative contact name outside of your household. Microchipped pets are more likely to be identified and returned to you.
- » Update your contact details with your vet.

Disaster preparation

Preparing a pet grab-and-go kit ahead of time can help you care for your pet during emergencies. See the checklist on the next page for a list of essential items for a grab-and-go kit.

It's important to store a copy of your pet-related documents in your pet disaster kit.

For easy access from wherever you are, save all of your pet's important information (microchip number, photographs, medical, veterinary and contact details) online, e.g. Dropbox, mobile phone or webmail.

If you are evacuated

It is important to understand that **most disaster shelters will not accept pets** because of health and safety regulations and other considerations (guide and disability dogs are allowed). You may have to confine your pet at home, or make boarding arrangements early.

If leaving your home with your pets, secure them in a portable carrier or crate. This needs to be large enough that they can stand, turn around, and lie down.

If you are forced to leave your pets at home during a disaster

While leaving pets confined at home is a serious decision, they have a much better chance inside than being left to roam unprotected. If you need to do this:

- » Confine them inside a secure part of the house (e.g. laundry or bathroom)
- » Ensure they have access to an elevated spot (table, counter etc.) to escape possible flooding
- » Make sure that they have food, water and bedding.

If you have larger animals (e.g. horses), take early action to protect or relocate them to appropriate premises. Consider painting your phone number on the animal with non-toxic paint so that it's easier for people to call you if the animal wanders from your property.

PREPARE A PET GRAB-AND-GO KIT

What to pack in your pet disaster kit

Water, food, medications

Canned food should be single sized, as you may not have access to a fridge

- 1 week supply of water for each pet
- 1 week supply of canned or dry food for each pet, stored in waterproof containers
- Travel bowls for food and water, e.g. fold up bowls
- Manual can opener if using cans
- Feeding instructions for each animal
- Two week's supply of any medications (if applicable)
- Medication instructions (if applicable)
- One dose of flea, tick and heartworm treatment
- Pet first aid book and kit – or ask your vet what they recommend including for first aid

Documents

Include a photo of you and your pet together to help prove ownership if you get separated.

- Your contact information, including an alternative contact person
- Contact information for your vet (check they have your correct contact details too)
- Phone numbers for the Animal Shelter and local council (check that council has correct details for you too)
- Copy of your pet's current vaccination record and medical summary
- Current pet photos and descriptions
- Phone numbers and address of where you and your pet might be staying in an emergency, e.g. pet-friendly motel, cattery or dog boarding kennel
- Waterproof wallet to store these records

Other supplies

Aluminium roasting pans are perfect for temporary litter trays. Newspaper or paper towels can be used for litter

- Collar with name and phone number attached, leash and/or harness
- Secure portable carriers to help transport animals safely
- Towels and blankets for bedding, warmth and to reduce stress
- Pet toys
- Litter box and litter, poop scoop and plastic bags for animal litter clean-up, and disposal
- Cleaning supplies for accidents (paper towels, plastic bags, disinfectant)
- Zip ties can be used if required for strong and easy fixtures to cages/collars