



Pet Disaster preparedness checklist – September 2013

September may be National disaster preparedness month, but disasters can happen at any time, so anytime is a good time to review this document to make sure you are prepared to take care of your furry friends before, during and after a disaster.

Our bull-and-terrier breeds enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. These breeds that we love so dearly are very sensitive family or pack oriented dogs, and in situations such as disasters, your dogs will look to their owners for support and guidance. The following information though, produced to benefit owners of Pit Bull breeds, should be considered helpful to all pet owners. All of your dogs and cats are more than just pets, they really are just like any other family member. Pets deserve to be cared for and protected.

The best way to ensure the safety of your family is to be prepared with a disaster plan. Being that you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can help save lives.

Consider learning First Aid for your Pets

There are two main programs that teach pet first aid. The American Red Cross has developed Dog First Aid and Cat First Aid, comprehensive guides to help keep pets healthy and safe. These guides cover a multitude of topics from basic responsibilities, like spaying/neutering and giving medications, to managing cardiac emergencies and preparing for disasters. These guides provide information that is a 'MUST HAVE' for any loving pet owner.

PetTech® is another first aid course you might consider. It is extremely comprehensive and includes instruction for pet CPR.

How best to prepare for disaster

Plan to take your pets with you in an evacuation. If it is not safe for you to stay, it is not safe for them either. When disaster strikes, you may find traditional Boarding and Shelter facilities full with pets from other families. As such, you should do your best to be prepared to provide for your pets without help from others.

You may find that evacuation shelters do not, accept pets because of health and safety concerns and other considerations. Though there may be exceptions granted for service animals, you may find that your 'Family Pet' is not allowed. As such, you should prepare by doing the following:

- Know which hotels and motels along your potential evacuation routes will accept you and your pets in an emergency. Call ahead for reservations if you know you may need to evacuate. Ask if no-pet policies could be waived in an emergency.
- Know which friends, relatives, boarding facilities, animal shelters or veterinarians can care for your animals in an emergency. Prepare a list with phone numbers. Remember, however, that they may fill up.
- Although your animals may be more comfortable together, be prepared to house them separately.
- Include your pets in evacuation drills so that they become used to entering and traveling in their carriers calmly.
- Make sure that your pet's vaccinations are current and that all dogs and cats are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Many pet shelters require proof of current vaccinations to reduce the spread of disease.
- We strongly suggest you consider having your pet "microchipped" by your veterinarian or a clinic.
- Ask a neighbor that you trust to keep an eye out for the wellbeing of your pets. If you are not home when disaster strikes hopefully that neighbor can check on your pets.

What Should You Do?

Assemble a portable kit with emergency supplies for your pets. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers so that they can be carried easily. Your kit should include—

- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that they can't escape.
- When you get to your evacuation location, you may find it helpful to have one carrier for each pet. Each carrier should allow your pet to turn around and lay down comfortably in it.
- Enough drinking water and food for up to two weeks.
- Dry Food in a waterproof container, or canned food with pop tops; if your cans do not have pop tops, be sure to pack a manual can opener.
- Non-spill bowls to hold food and water and, if appropriate, a cat litter/pan.
- A first aid kit. Talk to your veterinarian about appropriate supplies to carry in it. You may also purchase pet first aid kits online.
- Current photos of you with your pet(s) in case they get lost. Since many pets look alike, this will help to eliminate mistaken identity and confusion. If you are also in the picture, it will help shelter workers to confirm that the pets you've identified as yours.
- Copies of medical records documenting medical conditions and behavior problems.
- Medications and dosing instructions

- Information on feeding schedules
- The name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- All documents should be kept in sturdy water proof containers.
- Blankets
- Paper towels
- Disinfectants
- Liquid bleach (Do not use "Scented" or color safe bleaches, or those with added cleaners)
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.
- Plastic bags for waste disposal
- White sheet to cover each kennel to calm each of your pets.

Know What to Do As the Disaster Approaches

- Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.
- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Ensure that all pets are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification.
- Check that your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring pets inside so you won't have to search for them if you need to leave quickly.

If you must leave your pet behind (we recommend against leaving your pets behind, however).

- Ensure that your pet has enough food and water for 5 to 7 days.
- Post a note in a prominent place where your pets are being kept as to where you are evacuating too. This note will facilitate reuniting you with your pets after the disaster is over.
- Place your pets in a room that is well ventilated, but without windows such as a storage or laundry room.
- Do not tie your pets up outside during a disaster.
- If you leave your pet behind, you can leave a faucet dripping into a plugged tub slowly adding water to the tub as a drinking source during the disaster.
- Post a 'Rescue Alert Sticker' or hand written note on the front door informing emergency workers that a pet is inside and waiting to be rescued. You can obtain 'Rescue Alert stickers' from your local chapter of the ASPCA.

When you reach your shelter location

- Let Your Family Know you're Safe by registering on the American Red Cross 'Safe and Well' Web site available through RedCross.org to let your family and friends know how you are doing. If you don't have Internet access, you can call 1-866-GET-INFO to register yourself and your family.
- You should have bottled water with you, but if not, you can sanitize apparently clean but suspect water by boiling it or adding 8 drops of liquid, unscented bleach to each gallon of water (if the drinking water appears cloudy, strain it through a clean cloth and add 16 drops of liquid, unscented bleach to each gallon). After adding bleach, wait 30 minutes before drinking.

After a Disaster ...

- As you return to your home, keep an eye out for downed power lines, fallen trees and other debris.
- If you find a lost pet, contact your local animal control or any other emergency numbers set up as the result of the disaster and report the animal. Isolate the stray from your animals until it can be returned to its owner.
- The behavior of pets may change dramatically after a disaster, becoming aggressive or defensive, so be aware of their well-being and protect them from hazards to ensure the safety of other people and animals.
- Watch your animals closely and keep them under your direct control as fences and gates may have been damaged.
- Pets may become disoriented, particularly if the disaster has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home.
- Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans.
- Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

If you lose your pet...

- Visit each shelter in your area at least every other day and have pictures of your pets which include yourself with you at all times. Be sure to report distinct markings to help in identifying your pet.
- Create a flyer with a photo of your pet and a description as well as your name, phone number and where you can be located.
- When you are re-united with your pet, immediately examine them for illness or injuries and obtain medical attention from your veterinarian. Injured or panicked animals may bite to protect themselves.

Emergency Action Plans for Your Family Should Include Your Animals—All of Your Animals

For information on disaster planning and emergency actions to take for livestock, horses, birds, reptiles or other small animals, such as gerbils or hamsters, please visit RedCross.org, the Humane Society of the United States (www.HSUS.org) or Ready.gov.

Additional information can also be found at the following websites

www.aspca.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/ - www.dogfriendly.com - www.pettravel.com - www.petswelcome.com

This information was summarized from information from the following sources: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire), Sacramento County, UC Davis health systems, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Red Cross, and The Weather Channel.