

Planning for Emergencies: Guidance for Pet owners



Your pet or pets are important members of your household and it is sensible to incorporate their needs into your planning. As is the case for humans, the likelihood that your pet will survive an emergency situation is greatly increased through a measure of pre-planning.

Some of the things you can and should do, like developing a buddy system or assembling a pet specific emergency kit, are the same for any emergency.

Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you should make plans in advance for your pet.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, be aware that pets may not be allowed in a public rest centre so you should plan in advance for alternatives. Epping Forest District Council Animal Welfare team will be involved in any large scale evacuation but are likely to be extremely busy so once again try to pre-plan your own arrangements. EFDC also has agreements in place with local kennels to look after animals displaced through emergencies. If your pets remain at home, let the emergency services know (leave a note on your door or window) and tell staff at the rest centre.

Prepare – include pet specific items in your own emergency kit

Think about the basics first – food, water and clothing. Consider two kits – one containing all you and your pet would need if you had to stay in the house for some time and another smaller kit that you can take with you if required. Review your kits regularly to ensure that contents are fresh and still useable.

Food – keep at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container.

Water – store at least three days of water specifically for your pets in addition to your own needs.

Medicines and medical records – keep an extra supply of medicines in your kit along with any details that may be needed to re-supply. Also keep your vets contact details, vaccination records and microchip details handy.

First Aid – talk to your vet about what is most appropriate for your particular pet. A basic kit could include bandages, tape and scissors, flea treatments and latex gloves.

ID and restraints – get your pet microchipped if at all possible. Your pet dog or cat should wear a collar with an ID tag at all times especially if your are evacuated to a rest centre. You will also need a harness or lead for dogs. During emergencies the most placid of pets may become anxious and aggressive when faced with new situations. All pets should be appropriately controlled or contained, allowing for your animal to feel safe and more at ease.

Pet carrier – A properly designed pet carrier is the best way to transport you pet especially in an emergency. Take advice from your vet on the most suitable.

Sanitation – include pet litter, paper towels, plastic bags and some household bleach in your kit.

Photographs – include a photo of you and your pet together. If you become separated, a photo will be useful in finding and identifying your pet and proving ownership. Include detailed information about breed, age, sex, colour and identifying marks.

Toys – put a few favourite toys in with your kit. Familiar items may help reduce the stress of being in an unfamiliar environment.

Plan – What will you do in an emergency?

Assess the situation – depending on the circumstances and the nature of the emergency the first important decision is whether to stay put or get away. Follow the advice of the emergency services – they are best placed to understand the nature of the emergency. However, you should plan for both possibilities.

Create a plan to get away – consider how you will assemble your pets and family and anticipate where you will go. Discuss the issue with family and friends who may be able to take you in with your pets. Identify kennels or catteries and keep a record of their contact details.

Develop a buddy system – plan with neighbours, friends or relatives to make sure someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Share information with your pet care buddy and show them where you keep supplies and your emergency kits. Designate specific locations, one nearby and one more distant, where you will meet in an emergency.

Talk to your vet – discuss the type of thing that you should include in your emergency kit specifically for your pet. Get the contact details for vets in several towns at varying distances from your home. Keep your contact information up to date with pet microchip services.

Stay informed

Those who take the time to prepare themselves and their pets will encounter less stress, difficulty or worry during an emergency. It is important to understand the types of emergency that may affect your area and the roles of the emergency services should something happen. Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal needs and seek out information that is specific to your pets. Take the time now to get yourself and your pet ready.

Contacts

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this guidance you can contact;

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