

## HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PETS FOR A HURRICANE



*Hurricanes are a scary threat to anyone who lives near the coast.*

*Follow these tips before and during a storm to keep your pets safe.*

### **Before the storm, find out which evacuation shelters allow pets.**

Many pet owners complain that they were turned away from evacuation shelters because they brought pets. Call your local and county officials and find out where you can take your pet before the storm hits. Your veterinarian or boarding facility may also take in pets during severe weather. Find out your options and make plans for your pet well in advance.

### **Use a pet carrier.**

One of the most important pieces of equipment you can have during an evacuation or severe weather event is a pet carrier. This is especially important when transporting small dogs and cats. Carriers are required at many pet shelters and can serve as a safe place for a nervous pet.

### **Make sure you have at least two weeks of your pet's medications on hand.**

In the event that a hurricane strikes, make sure you have 14 days of prescription medications, as well as heartworm and flea preventatives. Pack them in a bag with your pet's essentials and write down your current administration schedule in case you have to leave your pet at a kennel or other facility. Apply heartworm and flea preventative before placing your pet in an evacuation facility—even if it's not quite time for an application. Your pet may be exposed to fleas and mosquitos and the extra protection will only help.

### **Carry a week's worth of food and water.**

If possible, divide your pet's meals into individual storage bins and bags. This will help ensure you bring enough food and allow you to assist others who may have to care for your pet during an evacuation. Carry bottled water (24 ounces per day for a 20-lb. dog and 8 ounces per day for a 10-lb. cat) and bowls. Many shelters will not have adequate food and water on hand for pets.

### **Bring at least two slip leashes.**

Carry the simple slip-type webbing or nylon leashes with you at all times. A frightened dog can slip out of a collar, but a slip leash can hold it securely. A slip leash can also be used to restrain a cat in a pinch. Carry an extra leash in your pocket in case someone else needs it or you lose yours.



*Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think about the basics for survival for your pets*

*No one plans on a major storm disrupting his or her life. What you can prepare for is how you'll respond when the hurricane watches and warnings are announced.*

### **Bring a printed copy of your pet's vaccine and medical history.**

Contact your veterinarian a couple of days before a storm approaches to obtain any necessary forms. Even better: Keep a medical folder for your pets that contains your pet's latest physical exam reports, blood tests and proof of vaccines or licenses. If you wait until a hurricane is imminent, your veterinarian may not be able to provide you with these documents. If your pet has a medical condition, make sure you understand the diagnosis, most recent diagnostic test results, treatment and prognosis. In an emergency, quick access to this information can save your pet's life.

### **Have identification and contact information on your pet and carrier.**

Be sure your pet is wearing a secure collar with your current contact information, including cell phone numbers. If you don't have an ID tag, write your information in indelible ink on the collar and carrier. Consider microchipping your pet. If possible, include a contact not travelling with you in a safe area.

### **Take a photo of your pet before you leave your home.**

A current photograph on a cell phone can be the difference between lost and found in the event you become separated during the storm.

### **Prepare for anxiety.**

Hurricanes can last for many hours. Even the most storm-hardened pet can experience anxiety after numerous hours of howling wind and changes in barometric pressure. Carry anxiety wraps, calming herbal remedies and prescription medications if you suspect your pet needs them. Familiar items such as favorite toys, treats, and bedding can help reduce stress. Talk to your veterinarian a few days before a major storm to stock up on aides for your pet's anxiety.

### **Pack litter, piddle pads, trash bags, shampoo, brushes, and towels.**

Bring a small baking pan and litter for cats, piddle pads towels and trash bags for dogs – plenty of them. Also pack bathing supplies – to keep your pet clean throughout the storm.

### **Bring plenty of patience.**

Keep in mind that everyone is just as stressed, nervous, and worried as you are. Try to be courteous, understanding, and helpful. If everyone remains calm, stays focused, and slows down, preparation and rescue efforts will run much more smoothly.