

# Information for Pet Owners

If you must evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely will not survive on their own; and if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

## Plan for Pet Disaster Needs

- Identifying shelter. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out which motels and hotels in and outside your area allow pets – well in advance of needing them. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers – they might be able to provide information concerning pets during a disaster.
- While the sun is still shining, consider packing a pet survival kit which could be easily put to use if disaster hits. Pack pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, non-electric can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they're not available later.
- Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.

## Prepare to shelter your pet

- Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office to get advice and information on sheltering your pet and pet-friendly shelters.
- If you are unable to return to your home after the storm, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close.
- Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current. Include copies in your pet survival kit along with a photo of your pet.

## As the storm approaches

- Bring your pets inside immediately.
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed your pets moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink.
- Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. **Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.**
- Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.
- In an emergency, you may have to take your birds with you. Talk with your veterinarian or local pet store about special food dispensers that regulate the amount of food a bird is given. Make sure that the bird is caged and the cage is covered by a thin cloth or sheet to provide security and filtered light.

### **After the storm**

- If after a disaster you have to leave town, **take your pets with you.** They depend on you, and are unlikely to survive on their own.
- In the first few days after the disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost. Also, snakes, insects and dangerous animals may be brought into the area with flood areas. Downed power lines are a hazard.
- The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely.