

Keeping Animals Safe During Emergencies



Planning can be the difference between surviving an emergency and catastrophic loss. Just beginning your emergency plan? Start small and improve your plan over time.



GETTING STARTED

List what you have: your animals, people who can help during an emergency, and equipment and supplies on hand.

Consider emergencies you might experience (such as winter storms, tornadoes, wildfires), the damage that might result (such as fences down, power outages), and actions you will need to take.

Make a plan to “shelter in place” if it’s safe to do so. Do you have enough help, supplies, and equipment for 1 week or more? How will you care for your animals and the people staying behind to care for them?

Also make a plan to evacuate if you cannot stay. Will you take your animals with you? How will you move them, and where will they go? Do you have enough equipment to move the animals? If not, who can help fill your gaps? Talk with them ahead of time to see if they will help, and formalize the agreement.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Write down your plan. Share it with everyone who has a role in helping during an emergency. Train staff and volunteers on their roles.

Maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list for individuals who will help you, including veterinarians and emergency management officials.

Practice your plan regularly so you are ready when an emergency occurs. Test and maintain your equipment, too.

Introduce yourself to local emergency management before an emergency occurs. Share your plan with them. Make sure you know how to contact them if you have needs in an emergency or if public safety issues (such as dangerous animal escapes) arise.

**Keeping animals safe is a process:
Plan. Prepare. Practice.**

PRACTICAL TIP



To find contact information for your local emergency manager:

- Use your web browser to search for [your city or county] and “emergency manager.”
- Still cannot find them? Ask your police or fire department by calling their non-emergency line.

This Animal Care Aid was developed to provide information about emergency management for businesses with animals. For more information, check out www.ready.gov/animals and www.zahp.aza.org.

Questions? Email us at CenterforAnimalWelfare@usda.gov

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