



KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE DURING TIMES OF DISASTER

Pets enrich the lives of individuals and families in more ways than can be counted. In turn, they depend on their masters for their safety and well being. The American Red Cross offers guidance to pet owners to be prepared to protect pets when disaster strikes.

Your closest Red Cross disaster shelters may not accept pets because of health and safety regulations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for your pets. If you need to evacuate, take your pets with you. Leaving them behind can result in injury, loss, or death. Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places that are along your evacuation routes, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have, as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.
- Assemble a pet disaster supplies kit including medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit; sturdy leash, harness, and/or carrier; current photos; food, water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener; information on feeding schedules, behavior problems, medical conditions, and the name of phone number of the veterinarian; pet beds and toys.
- In the case of advanced warning issued, call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets. Bring all pets inside so that you won't have to search for them if you have to evacuate in a hurry. Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing securely-fastened collars with up-to-date identification. Have your pets inoculations updated. It is also recommended to put the temporary shelter location on the back of your pet's ID tag. ***Never leave animals unattended.***
- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have photo identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the case or carrier.
- Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.
- If you have large animals, such as horses or cattle, make plans to evacuate early when possible. It may be difficult to maneuver large animal transport vehicles in evacuation traffic.

For more information contact the American Red Cross Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter
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www.redcrossalcoast.org