



WHY PET OWNERS MUST PLAN

The only way to reduce the devastation of a hurricane is to be prepared - including preparation for your pets. Forty-three percent of U.S. households have pets. Florida has over 80% of its population within 10 miles of the coast. There is no geographical point in Florida that is more than 60 miles from saltwater. Any disaster that threatens humans, threatens animals as well.

Making arrangements for your pets is part of your household disaster planning. If you must evacuate your home, plan for your pet too. For health and space reasons, pets will not be allowed in public emergency shelters.

BEFORE THE DISASTER

Plan now; identify your evacuation level to determine if and when you would have to evacuate. If you are located in a storm surge flood plain, the decision to evacuate will depend upon the category of the storm. Always prepare for one category higher than the one being forecast as a hurricane often increases in strength just before making landfall. All mobile home residents must evacuate, regardless of location.

Make sure your pets have current immunizations and take these records with you if you need to evacuate. If you plan to go to a motel, determine in advance whether pets are welcome and what special rules may apply. See if your veterinarian will accept your pet for boarding in an emergency.

Develop a pet survival kit:

- ☺ proper ID collar and rabies license tag
- ☺ carrier or cage
- ☺ water and food bowls
- ☺ medications
- ☺ food supply to last about two weeks
- ☺ newspapers/plastic bags for waste disposal
- ☺ toys and comfort items
- ☺ muzzles, if necessary
- ☺ manual can opener
- ☺ proper ID on all belongings

All pets should have secure carriers, or collapsible cages. Carriers should be large enough for the pets to stand comfortably and turn around. Familiarize your pets with the carrier ahead of time. The carrier will be a secure and comforting refuge if the animal is required to live in it for days or weeks after the storm.

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

Leave early. An unnecessary trip is far better than waiting too long to leave safely.

Long distance evacuation is not recommended as roads will be crowded. Friends or relatives in a safe area are the best choice. If they are unable to house both you and your pet, try to arrange shelter for your pet at a veterinarian or kennel close to your evacuation destination.

If you plan to shelter your pets at a kennel or clinic, call before evacuating to determine if space is available. Allow sufficient time to travel from the kennel to your evacuation destination after making certain that your animals are secure.

Throughout the evacuation and the storm, your pets will need reassurance from you. Remain calm, keep as close to their normal routine as possible, and speak to them regularly in a calm, reassuring voice.

DON'T WAIT

Arrange for a safe place to stay with your pets. Remember to develop a plan now. Review your family plan and restock your family disaster supplies too!

Do not leave your pet in your home or tied outside your home while you leave for a shelter. Do not leave your pets in vehicles while you are housed in a shelter.