



# PETS AND DISASTERS



*The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan should include your pets.*

*It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster; so plan ahead.*

**Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets because of State health and safety regulations. The only exceptions to this policy are service animals who assist people with disabilities.**



## **BEFORE A DISASTER**

Ask friends, relatives, or others outside your immediate 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.

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, including phone numbers with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency. Include 24-hour phone numbers.

Include pet supplies as part of your emergency kit.

## **DISASTER SUPPLIES FOR YOUR PET**

- Portable carrier (essential for cats)
- Food and water bowls
- One-week supply of food and water, stored in plastic bottles
- Litter and litter box for cats
- Medications
- First aid kit
- Health records, including vaccination records
- Instructions on your pet’s feeding schedule and diet, medications, and any special needs
- Leashes

***Make sure your dogs and cats have permanent microchip identification and securely-fastened collars with dog licenses and ID tags containing up-to-date information. Attach to the collar a tag with the phone number and address of your temporary shelter or a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet’s ID tag.***

## ***DURING A DISASTER***

Bring your pets inside immediately. Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can keep them from running away. ***NEVER LEAVE A PET OUTSIDE OR TIED UP DURING A STORM!***

If you evacuate, take your pets. If it's not safe for you to stay in the emergency area, it's not safe for your pets. Animals left behind can easily be injured, lost, or killed. Avoid these outcomes by planning now how you will safely evacuate your pets and where you will temporarily keep them.

### ***BIRDS***

Transport in a secure travel cage or carrier.

In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside.

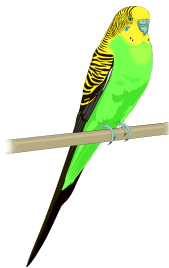
During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the bird's feathers periodically.

Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content.

Have leg bands and a photo for ID.

Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area.

Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.



### ***REPTILES***



Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site.

If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you.

Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad.

When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

### ***POCKET PETS***



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.

## ***AFTER A DISASTER***

In the first few days after a 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.

The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.