

Including Your Animals in Disaster Preparedness

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U.S. Virgin Islands – Pets can't plan ahead for themselves, but when included in their families' disaster preparedness plan, everyone is more likely to survive together.

Here are some tips on disaster preparedness for pets:

- If a pet gets lost, its tag is its ticket home. Make sure pet's tags are up-to-date and fastened to its collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of another contact in case you can't be reached. A waterproof pouch containing identification information can be attached to the collar.
- Consider implanting a microchip with all of its information on it, beneath the pet's skin. A veterinarian or an animal shelter can perform the procedure, but the chip also has to be registered.
- In a waterproof bag or container, store important pet documentation, such as adoption papers, vaccination records, feeding schedules, notes about behavior issues and your veterinarian's contact information.
- Take a photo of you with your pet and put it in the waterproof container. In case you get separated, you can show what your pet looks like and you will also have proof that it is your pet when it's found.
- Have enough pet supplies, food, bottled water and medications for each pet for at least a week, including a can opener for canned food. Keep canned or dried food in airtight containers and include a manual can opener.
- Have sanitation items such as cat litter, litter box and scoop, trash bags, newspaper and paper towels. A checklist of items to include can be found online at <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>.
- If you plan to shelter in place, identify the safest area of your home where you can all stay together. Put all emergency supplies in that room ahead of time, including your pet's crate and supplies.
- A pet may require a personal carrier or cage, which should be big enough for it to stand and move around in.



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Page 1 of 3

- Pet birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians have additional care needs. Assemble their supplies in your survival kit and plan ahead how you will shelter in place or evacuate, such as assuring you have cages for transporting them and any special equipment they may need.

Include Your Pets in Emergency Planning

- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinary offices that might be able to shelter animals in disaster emergencies.
- Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Talk with your pet care buddy about your disaster plans and show them where you keep your pets' emergency supply kit.
- Designate specific locations, one in your immediate neighborhood and another farther away, where you will meet your buddy in an emergency.

Preparation for Larger Animals

Those with larger animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats or pigs should also plan for these animals by:

- Ensuring all animals have some form of identification.
- Evacuating animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
- Making sure vehicles and trailers for transporting animals as well as experienced handlers and drivers are available.
- Ensuring destinations have food, water, veterinary care and handling equipment.

Additional Resources

- The [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) has published several guides to disaster preparedness for pets and livestock.
- [Do YOU Have a Plan for Your Livestock Should Disaster Strike?](#) is a fact sheet from the United States Department of Agriculture.
- [Disaster Preparedness for Your Pet](#) is a publication of the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control.



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Page 2 of 3

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