

Emergencies come in many forms, and they may require anything from a brief absence from the home to permanent evacuation. Each type of disaster requires different measures to keep pets safe. The best thing a person can do for themselves and their pets is to be prepared.

### Arrange a Safe Haven



Arrange a safe haven for pets in the event of evacuation. **DO NOT LEAVE PETS BEHIND. Remember, if it isn't safe for a person, it isn't safe for pets.** They may become trapped or escape and be exposed to numerous life-threatening hazards. Note that not all disaster shelters can accept pets, so it is imperative that a place has been determined ahead of time where pets will be taken in an emergency:

- § Contact a veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities.
- § Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets.
- § Identify hotels or motels outside of the immediate area that accept pets.
- § Ask friends and relatives outside the immediate area if they would be willing to take in pets.

### Emergency Supplies and Traveling Kits

- § Pet first-aid kit (ask vet what to include)
- § Litter or paper toweling
- § Liquid dish soap and disinfectant
- § Disposable garbage bags for clean-up
- § Pet feeding dishes
- § Extra collar or harness as well as an extra leash
- § Photocopies of medical records and a waterproof container with a two-week supply of any medicine pet requires (Remember, food and medications need to be rotated out of the emergency kit—otherwise they may go bad or become useless)
- § Bottled water and pet food, at least 7 days' worth (store in a cool, dry place and replace every two months)
- § A traveling bag, crate or sturdy carrier, ideally one for each pet and disposable litter trays (aluminum roasting pans are perfect)
- § Flashlight
- § Blanket (for scooping up a fearful pet)
- § Recent photos of pets (in case separated and need to make "Lost" posters)
- § Especially for cats: Pillowcase or EvackSack, toys, scoopable litter
- § Especially for dogs: Extra leash, toys and chew toys, a week's worth of cage liner

#### Special Considerations for Birds

- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier
- In warm weather, carry a spray bottle to periodically moisten your bird's feathers.
- Have recent photos available, and keep birds leg bands on for identification.
- If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels that can be changed frequently
- Keep the carrier in as quiet an area as possible.
- It is particularly imperative that birds eat on a daily basis, so purchase a timed feeder. If it is necessary to leave bird unexpectedly, the feeder will ensure his daily feeding schedule.
- Items to keep on hand: Catch net, heavy towel. Blanket or sheet to cover cage, cage liner.

## Evacuation Preparation

When recommendations for evacuation have been announced, follow the instructions of local officials. To minimize evacuation time, take these simple steps:

### Special Considerations for Reptiles

- A snake may be transported in a pillowcase, but you should have permanent and secure housing for him when you reach a safe place
- Take a sturdy bowl that is large for your pet to soak in. It's also a good idea to bring along a heating pad or other warming device, such as a hot water bottle.
- Lizards can be transported like birds.

§ Store an emergency kit and leashes as close to an exit as possible.

§ Make sure all pets wear collars and tags with up-to-date identification. A pet's ID tag should contain name, telephone number, and any urgent medical needs. Be sure to write pet's name, owners name and contact information on the pet carrier.

§ It is recommended that pets be microchipped since it is a more permanent form of identification. A microchip is implanted in the animal's shoulder area, and can be read by scanner at most animal shelters.

§ Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster. Pets can become frightened and disoriented and wander away from home during a crisis.

§ Consider evacuation routes and call ahead to make arrangements for boarding pets outside of the danger zone at the first sign of disaster.

### Geographic and Climatic Considerations

If living in an area that is prone to certain natural catastrophes, such as tornadoes, earthquakes or flood, plan accordingly.

§ Determine well in advance which rooms offer safe havens. These rooms should be clear of hazards such as windows, flying debris, etc.

§ Choose easy-to-clean areas such as utility rooms, bathrooms, and basements as safe zones.

§ Access to a supply of fresh water is particularly important. In areas that may lose electricity, fill up bathtubs and sinks ahead of time to ensure that there is access to water during a power outage or other crises.

§ In the event of flooding, go to the highest location in the home, or a room that has access to counters or high shelves where animals can take shelter.

### Special Considerations for Small Animals

- Small animals, such as hamsters, gerbils, mice and guinea pigs, should be transported in secure carriers with bedding materials, food and food bowls.
- Items to keep on hand: Salt lick, extra water bottle. Small hidebox or tube, a week's worth of bedding.

If emergency officials recommend remaining the home, it's crucial to keep pets near and keep emergency kit and supplies close at hand. Pets may become stressed during the in-house confinement, so consider crating them for safety and comfort.



***For more sources of information on this topic visit:***

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co)

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE CRUELTY OF ANIMALS [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org)

THE HUMANE SOCIETY [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)