

Disaster Preparedness

Companion Animals



BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

Identify Your Pet: Keep your pet's license current and make sure that a collar and identification tag are worn at all times. Consider getting a safe, permanent microchip for your pet. A microchip ID cannot be lost or removed.

Crate Train Your Pet: Train your cat or dog to enter a carrier on command. Do this by putting your pet's favorite treat in the carrier and sounding a bell at the same time. Repeat this process every day, until your pet comes running at the sound of the bell. Continue this routine often enough to keep it fresh in your pet's mind. This training will be extremely helpful in locating frightened pets and transporting them quickly to safety. Dogs should also be trained to come on command.

Secure Birdcages and Fish Tanks: Because these items may move and/or break during a disaster, securing them on low stands or tables will be helpful. Also, tighten the latch on your birdcage so that the door cannot be shaken open easily.

Develop a Neighborhood Plan: Get to know your neighbors and their pets. Keep an updated list of their home, work and mobile phone numbers (update every six months) and select a neighborhood coordinator who will be ready to assist should a disaster occur when you are not home. It is best that this person spends a lot of time at home or works within walking distance of the neighborhood. Select one or two back-up coordinators, in case the primary person is unavailable.

Prepare a First Aid Kit, which should include:

- Any special medication prescribed by your veterinarian
- Large and small bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Q-tips
- Antibiotic Ointment
- Hydrogen Peroxide (to induce vomiting or for cleaning deep wounds)
- Elastic Tape to secure bandages
- Eye Wash (saline) and Ear Cleaning (ChlorhexiDem, Epi-otic) solutions

FOLLOWING A DISASTER

In Case of Evacuation: Red Cross shelters do not accept pets. So, prepare a list of back-up arrangements, such as homes of friends and family, hotels that allow pets, boarding facilities, veterinary hospitals, and/or animal shelters. It is generally **not** recommended that you leave your pet behind when evacuating, but if you must, follow these guidelines to help ensure your pet's safety:

- Post a highly visible sign in a window to let rescue workers know how many pets were left behind.
- Leave plenty of water in a large, open container which cannot be tipped over.
- Leave food in timed feeders (check local pet stores). These will prevent your pet from eating a week's worth of food in one day.

continued on next page -->

- Do not tie or cage your pet as the chances for survival are greater if your pet can escape easily.

If Your Pet Becomes Lost:

- Immediately call or visit the nearest animal shelter to report your missing pet.
- When deemed safe, return to your neighborhood to post and distribute “Lost Animal” posters, which should include your name, home address and phone number (posters available at MHS).
- Continue to search the area for your missing pet – a frightened animal may stay hidden for days.
- Call neighbors or service workers, such as mail carriers, police, firefighters and/or utility workers, for leads.

If You Find a Lost Pet: Notify the local animal shelter as soon as possible and be prepared to give a full description of the animal (i.e., breed, color and/or sex) and its location. Remember that sick and/or injured animals can become unpredictable from the stress of an injury and should be cared for by professionals familiar with proper handling techniques.

PET DISASTER KIT

A prepared disaster kit, kept in a safe and easily accessible place, will enable you to provide immediate care to your pet in an emergency. A calm, well-trained pet who is either on a leash or in a carrier will be more welcome wherever you go. Items to include:

- Sturdy crate and/or carrier
- Identification tag and collar for both dogs and cats
- Leashes
- Food/water (7-day supply for each pet)
- If providing canned food – manual can opener/plastic lid
- Non-spill bowls
- Litter/litterbox
- Special medication
- Copy of your pet’s current vaccination history
- Recent photos of your pet
- Pet First-Aid kit (see content listed in this handout)
- Pet First-Aid book
- Phone numbers of the local emergency veterinary clinic: (In Marin) Pet Emergency & Specialty Center of Marin in San Rafael 415.456.7372
- Phone number of your local animal shelter; The Marin Humane Society provides emergency assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week: 415.883.4621
- Long-term confinement equipment, such as portable caging, chains, cable runs and/or tie-out stakes
- Plastic bags for cat litter disposal and dog clean-up
- Newspapers and paper towels
- Emergency phone numbers

For more information about disaster preparation, please call 415.506.6209.