

Disaster Preparedness

Large & Farm Animals



BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

Do you have a plan for your animals in case of an earthquake, flood or fire? In the event of an emergency, a well-practiced disaster program will not only reduce stress, but will also save precious time and lives. Listed below are The Marin Humane Society's recommendations to help keep you and your animals safe during a disaster.

Develop a Barn Safety and Evacuation Plan

Your evacuation plan should outline each type of disaster and determine specific scenarios best suited for each situation. It should include a list of resources, such as trucks, trailers, pasture and/or feed, which might be needed in an evacuation, as well as a designated person who will unlock gates and doors and make your facility easily accessible to emergency personnel.

- Post your plan where it is clearly visible
- Make sure that everyone who lives, works or boards at your barn is familiar with the plan
- Get to know your neighbors and their animals
- Select a neighborhood coordinator who is familiar with your evacuation plan and will be ready to assist should a disaster occur when you are not at home
- Learn to handle your neighbors' animals and identify those that have special handling needs (i.e. stallions)
- Post an updated phone list (home and office) of all neighbors and anyone who boards at your facility

Food and Water Requirements

All animals should be given unrestricted access to water. With the exception of birds, animals can go extended periods of time without food, but can only last a couple of days at the most without water. Sources of feed should be identified before a disaster.

In general, most herbivorous animals eat approximately 1–2% of their body weight in some form of roughage. Roughage is hay or hay-like products (pellets, cubes etc.). In an emergency, grain products or other concentrates need not be given.

DURING AND FOLLOWING A DISASTER

Your personal safety and the safety of those around you should always be your first concern. A pre-determined plan will help you remain calm and think clearly. Remember to communicate and cooperate with all emergency personnel. If you must leave the premises, let someone know where you are going and try to remain in contact with that person.

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In the Event of a Fire

Contact emergency personnel immediately. Do not enter burning buildings as smoke inhalation can be deadly. Report changes in wind direction, speed and fire behavior. Post a lookout for possible dangers. Have your trailer hitched and pointed toward the road. Leave barn doors unlocked and keys in the ignition. Put halters on animals and keep gates unlocked but secure. If you believe that the barn will burn before emergency personnel arrive, release the animals to a safer location—animals will often return home on their own accord.

If you are caught out in the open when a fire hits, seek areas with sparse vegetation or bare ground. Lie face down in a depression and cover yourself with anything that will protect you from the heat. Avoid trying to outrun the head of a fire; instead, watch for slower burning flanks. Do not attempt to control the animals that are with you — let them go free as they will have a better chance of escaping the fire on their own.

In the Event of an Earthquake

During the quake, remember to drop, cover and hold on. Once the tremors have stopped, take a good look around. Do not enter buildings that may have become unstable during the quake. Like you, your animals will be frightened and need reassurance. If an animal has become injured or trapped, call emergency personnel immediately. Be prepared for aftershocks.

In the Event of a Flood

If you receive notice of rapidly rising waters, move all animals, feed and water to higher ground. Escape routes may be cut off quickly, so avoid leaving animals in standing water or in areas that may be cut off by the flood.

If You Must Leave Animals Behind

Post a highly visible sign (either on a window or a door) letting rescue workers know the breed and number of animals that remain. Leave plenty of food and water in an adequate size container that cannot be tipped over. Place extra food close to the animals so rescue workers can feed them daily. Do not tie animals or confine them to an area that may be easily destroyed. Be sure that the animals cannot get loose on roads or highways as this can lead to injury to both humans and animals, and can interfere with emergency rescue vehicles. Ideally, you will be able to secure your animals in a pasture.

If Your Animal Becomes Lost

Immediately call or visit the nearest animal shelter or emergency command post. When deemed safe, return to your neighborhood to post and distribute lost animal posters, which should include your name, address, phone number and a picture of the animal. Animals may stay hidden for weeks, so be patient and continue searching your area.

If You Find a Lost Animal

If you find a lost animal, please notify the local animal shelter as soon as possible and be prepared to give a full description of the animal, as well as its location. Remember that sick and/or injured animals can become unpredictable from stress and should be handled by a professional.

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What Can You Do to Help?

- Help organize a neighborhood rescue group
- Join an animal rescue team and learn techniques to aid animals during a disaster
- See if there is a local animal care organization that can use your help

Reduce Hazards

- Maintain a firebreak around all buildings
- Mow weeds and trim trees that reside close to any buildings
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters
- Repair exposed wires, rotten supports and blocked waterways
- Post “No Smoking” signs
- Clearly label all shut-offs
- Store combustibles, such as hay, straw, wood, shavings and gasoline, away from barns
- Remove overhanging trees that may fall on animals or buildings
- Keep an adequate water source

Identify Your Animal

Keep animals' vaccinations current and put photographs, papers and other identifying documents in a safe and easily accessible location. Brand, tag, freeze mark, tattoo or microchip your animals so that they have permanent identification.

Disaster Kit

A prepared disaster kit, kept in a safe and easily accessible place, will enable you to provide immediate care to your animals in an emergency.

Items to include:

- Ladder(s) long enough to reach the roof
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Non-spill bowls
- Water buckets
- Flashlight or lanterns
- Blankets
- Minimum 100 feet of hose
- Cotton ropes
- Cotton halters and lead ropes
- First-aid book
- Collars
- Animal handling equipment
- Blindfolds
- Fence panels
- Hot wire kits
- Portable first-aid kit
- Battery powered radio

For more information about disaster preparation, please call 415.506.6209.