

Ways for Families to Prepare

It is said that if you don't start preparing within 24 hours of getting information, you won't ever do it.

Here are 3 things which you can do today:

- Begin storing water
- Choose an out-of-area contact and make sure everyone has the phone number.
- Keep your gas tank more than half full

Here are the main steps you will need to take:

- Start storing supplies
- Develop a "what if there were a disaster" family plan
- Learn CPR and first aid

For information and details on preparing your home, office, school, and car, choose the appropriate links below.

General Family Preparedness Guidelines

- [First Aid Checklist](#)
- [General Checklist](#)
- [Checklist for Your Car](#)
- [Food and Water Storage Checklist](#)
- [Checklist for Children](#)
- [Family Emergency Plan Template](#)

Preparedness Guidelines for Pets

- [Basic Portable Pet Disaster Kit](#)
- [Animal Specific Evacuation Preparation Checklists](#)
- [Colorado State Animal Response Team \(CO-SART\)](#)

Your family plan should include your pets. After a disaster, if you must evacuate, plan to evacuate your pets also. Leaving them behind is likely to result in injury, loss, or worse.

Disaster shelters cannot accept pets. In the midst of disaster, it will likely be difficult to find animal shelters. So plan ahead:

- Keep a list of "pet-friendly" hotels and motels outside the immediate area. Call ahead for reservations if you have notice of impending disaster.
- Ask friends and relatives outside the area whether they can shelter your pets.
- Prepare a list of vets and boarding facilities that would be available during a disaster. Keep their 24-hour phone numbers.

- Ask local animal shelters if they provide shelter during a disaster. This should be your last resort.

Prepare a portable pet disaster supplies kit:

- Medications and medical records (in waterproof container), first aid kit
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers, long-term confinement equipment
- Current photos in case your pet gets lost
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, scoop bags, can opener
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and name and number of vet and local animal shelter
- Pet toys and bed if easily transportable

Often, warnings are issued hours or days in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet. As disaster approaches:

- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements.
- Check that your supply kit is ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring pets into the house so you won't have to search for them. Animals can often sense disasters approaching and may not act normally.
- Make sure pets have secure collars with up-to-date ID. Attach name and phone number of temporary shelter or contact outside the area.

Miscellaneous preparations:

- Always have enough pet food, water, and other supplies stored to last one week.
- Arrange with a neighbor to watch out for your pets if you're not home.
- Consider implanting an identification microchip (see your vet).
- Make sure animals are trained to come on command.
- Make sure animals are crate trained.
- Secure fish tanks and bird cages. Make sure bird cage latches are tight.

It is not recommended that you leave behind a pet when evacuating, but if you must:

- Leave a highly visible sign for rescue workers.
- Leave plenty of water in a large, non-tip container.
- Leave food in timed feeders.
- Do not tie or cage your pet; it has better chances of survival if it can escape easily.

When evacuating with your pet, be aware that animals react differently under stress. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere outside the home and keep them leashed or crated.

If your pet becomes lost, notify the local shelter immediately. Post signs and call neighbors and service workers for leads. Keep searching, as a frightened animal can stay hidden for days.

If you find a lost pet, notify the local shelter with a full description and its location. Watch out as the animal may be unpredictable due to stress or injury.

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage. If the weather is cold, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car first. If the weather is warm, bring a spray bottle to mist the birds' feathers. Provide fresh fruit or vegetables with high water content; do not carry water in the cage during transport. If the cage doesn't have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Keep the cage in a quiet area and don't let them out of it. Have a photo for identification.

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but should then be transferred to more secure housing. Bring food if the snake requires frequent feeding. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking, and a heating pad.

To transport house lizards, follow the directions for birds.

Small mammals such as gerbils should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take food, bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.