

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PETS

It's easy to think that disasters only affect "other people". But an emergency can strike at any time, in many forms- and pets are often the most innocent victims. Taking a few simple steps to plan in advance can help you keep your pet safe in the event of an emergency.

Arrange Shelter

- Make arrangements with a trusted friend or neighbor to take care of your pet if you can't make it home.
- Since health and safety regulations often prohibit disaster shelters from accepting pets, find out pet policies for hotels and motels in the area to which you plan to evacuate.
- Compile a list of boarding facilities including local animal shelters and veterinary offices that can provide foster care for your pet.
- Most important, never leave your pet behind. Even if you can't bring her with you, it's vital that you arrange for some form of temporary care. Animals left alone in a disaster situation have little chance of survival.

Put together an Emergency Pet Kit

Keep your kit in a waterproof container that's easy to carry. Items include:

- Food, water and medications for one week (don't forget a can opener if packing canned food).
- Food and Water Dishes
- Leash and/or Carrier
- Pet first aid kit
- Copies of medical and vaccination records
- Clear, current photos of your pet in case you're separated
- Poop bags or litter box and litter
- Blanket or towels

Make sure your pet is wearing ID

Provide your pet with a secure collar and current ID tag with your cell phone numbers on it. Also, consider getting your pet microchipped- that way, even if her collar becomes loose, animal recovery facilities can pull up your contact information with a quick scan.

Neighborhood Watch

Remember, emergencies aren't always limited to natural disasters. Have you thought about what you would do if you were able to get home to your pet during a power outage or if there was a gas leak in the neighborhood?

It's a good idea to make arrangements ahead of time with a trustworthy neighbor who is familiar with your pet to be an emergency caretaker. Exchange keys and make sure you provide your neighbor with your cell phone number as well as your veterinarian's contact information. Also, show that there are pets inside by placing emergency decal in a front

window of your home. Ask your local police or fire departments if they provide decals, or contact your favorite pet store.

No worries- VPI Pet Insurance helps!

As pet owner, understanding the risks to your pet's health is part of responsible care. Look to VPI (one of many pet insurance companies available) to protect your pet and your pocketbook from unexpected veterinary expenses. For more information, such as a free quote, call 1-8666-VET-PETS, or visit petinsurance.com.

For more information on Hurricane Safety Tips, please contact the Emergency Management System located at 115 S Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Fl. 33301 or (305)357-8250 or the Pembroke Pines Police Department 954-431-2200.