10 Emergency Checklist Items to Keep Your Pet Safe



Be Prepared

- [ ] Being caught unprepared during an emergency can feel overwhelming, especially if you have pets. That's why it's crucial to have an action plan that you can initiate at a moment's notice. In honor of National Animal Disaster Preparedness day on May 9, petMD offers the following emergency checklist items every pet owner should run through — before the disaster is at your door!

1. Prepare a Pet Emergency Go-Kit

- [ ] Assembling an emergency go-kit well in advance of a disaster will ensure nothing gets left behind. Your pet emergency go-kit should include first aid supplies and guide book; 3-day supply (minimum) of pet food in a waterproof container and bottled water; a safety harness and leash; waste cleanup supplies; proof of ownership and recent vaccinations; medications and medical records; and an emergency contact list, including veterinarian and nearby shelters.

2. Update Pet Tag, Microchip Information

- [ ] Most pet owners have equipped their loving animal with some sort of identification — a collar tag or microchip, for example. Unfortunately, many of us forget to update the information once we move or change our phone numbers. Ensure someone will be able to contact you should your pet be lost and found during an emergency.

3. Choose a 'Safe Spot'

- [ ] Many local and state health and safety regulations do not allow pets to accompany their owners to disaster shelters. Be prepared with a list of local pet-friendly hotels and motels, as well as nearby boarding facilities and veterinarians who may be able to shelter your animal in case of an emergency.

4. Identify Out-of-Area Animal Emergency Facilities

- [ ] It's best to have a list of emergency veterinary facilities outside your immediate area. Disasters of various kinds may shut down such facilities or limit their ability to take in animals. You should also ask your veterinarian if they have an emergency plan that includes setting up in an alternate, emergency facility.

5. Buddy Up with a Pet-Friendly Neighbor

- [ ] Nearby neighbors, friends and family are the perfect support system during an emergency and may even be able to evacuate your pet should disaster strike while you are far away from home.

6. Display a Pet Rescue Decal on Your Home

- [ ] Placing such a decal on your front door or window will let first responders know there is a pet (or pets) inside to evacuate. Remember to include your veterinarian's contact information and, if time allows, write "EVACUATED" across the sticker if you were able to evacuate with your pet(s).

7. Know Where to Search for Lost Animals

- [ ] Often pets lost during disasters end up at local animal shelters. Have the names, numbers and addresses of shelters in your area ready in case you need to call or pay one of those shelters a visit in order to search for your missing pet.

8. Keep a Picture of Your Pet Handy

- [ ] Having a recent picture of your pet in a wallet or cell phone can help in the event of separation.

9. Find Your Pet's Secret Hiding Spot

- [ ] Pets can easily become frightened and hide in your home during emergencies, especially natural disasters such as tornadoes, fire, floods and hurricanes. Be sure to know your pet's secret hiding spot in order to find them quickly and help you evacuate faster.

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