

# Plan Ahead Be Prepared



Natural disasters, such as flash floods, hurricanes, or forest fires, and man-made problems such as gas explosions, leaking tank cars, and terrorist incidents can arrive with little, if any, warning. The type of disaster will determine whether to shelter in place or evacuate the area. Your county/local emergency

management coordinator will have the most current updates and recommendations at the time of the disaster. This number can be found in the blue pages of your telephone book. By developing a disaster action plan for yourselves and your pets, you can improve the chances that all of you can make it through a disaster safely. If you are ever instructed to evacuate, please remember your pets.

## Take Steps to Protect Your Pets

**Have a safe place to take your pets.** Do this research ahead of time, *before a disaster strikes*. Prepare a list of emergency phone numbers, and keep it handy. If your pet has any special needs, such as a special diet or medication, or is an exotic pet (including reptiles, birds, fish), consider their requirements in your disaster planning, before you need to evacuate these animals.

**Ask a dependable friend or relative** who lives some distance away if you and/or your pets can stay with them during an emergency.

**Contact hotels and motels** outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets during times of emergencies, and any restrictions they may have.

**Make arrangements with trustworthy neighbors** for pet care if a disaster strikes and you cannot get home in time to evacuate.

**Find boarding kennels** within and outside your area. Know where they are, who stays on the premises with the animals in the event of a disaster, and what provisions would be made if the kennel should have to evacuate during a disaster.

**Listen for public service announcements** during a disaster that may instruct you to take your pets to a temporary emergency animal shelter. For these places, *you must do the following*:

**Get a portable pet carrier for each pet.** These carriers should be large enough for the pet to stand up and turn around in. Get your pet used to the carrier ahead of time. Snakes may be kept in plastic containers, and birds need their cages.

**Have identification for each pet.** Be sure your pet ALWAYS wears a well-fitted collar with proper identification, is micro-chipped or tattooed. ID tags and pet carriers should include your phone number(s) as well as the number of a contact outside the affected region.



Keep a leash handy (if appropriate) and get your pet used to it.

Be sure your pet's vaccinations are current. Keep the documentation together in a re-sealable plastic bag in your pet's disaster travel kit, along with name/phone of their veterinarian. Most boarding facilities and emergency animal shelters will require proof of current rabies and annual vaccinations or titers.

### Prepare a disaster travel kit

*In case you must leave the area with your pet, this kit should include:*

- Copies of Pet License, microchip, tattoo and/or ID, photos of pet (from all angles and with owner(s), and plastic bag with proof of vaccination (see above).
- Proper size metal or plastic pet carrier
- Leashes and obedience aids
- Non-spill water and food bowls
- Pet foods, including special diets
- Motion sickness pills prescribed by your veterinarian, if needed
- Water in sanitized non-breakable containers
- Special medications, with instructions
- Special needs items for exotic pets, such as a heat source
- Newspapers, paper towels, handy-wipes, can openers, a flashlight, and blankets

Buy ample quantities of pet food and cat litter when you buy your own disaster supplies.

Keep a supply of newspapers, plastic bags, cleaners, and disinfectants on hand to properly handle pet waste.

Know your pets' favorite hiding places.

Once the disaster strikes, you won't have time to look for them.

Practice evacuation with your pets until you can evacuate in a few minutes. Make sure your pet disaster kit is easily accessible. Include your trustworthy neighbor in this plan.

Obedience train your dog. Being well-behaved may save its life during a disaster and make it a welcome guest in an emergency animal shelter or pet-friendly motel.

Familiarize your pet with riding in a vehicle. This will make evacuating with your pet much easier.

Have current photographs of your pet, from all sides, especially those taken with you. These will help in identifying your pet. Consider sending these photos to out-of-state friends and relatives.

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## What to Do When an All-Clear Sounds

- Once the all-clear has sounded and you and your pets return to your home, be careful about allowing your pets outdoors unattended and off-leash. The disaster may have altered familiar scents and landmarks and your pet could easily get confused and become lost.
- In addition, sharp objects, downed electric lines, fallen trees and other debris, or contaminated water could present real danger to your pet. Raccoons, skunks or other wild animals may have entered the area and could present danger to your pets.
- If any animals are lost during the disaster, contact veterinarians, humane societies, pet shelters, and other facilities that might house animals. Be prepared to identify and document ownership when claiming lost livestock. The United States Department of Agriculture Missing Pet Network at [www.missingpet.net](http://www.missingpet.net) may be of assistance.
- If you own horses, livestock, or poultry, you need to develop emergency evacuation plans for them also. See the "Plain Talk on Protecting Livestock" guide, available at [www.NJHomelandSecurity.gov/animals](http://www.NJHomelandSecurity.gov/animals), your County Emergency Management Coordinator's office, or from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture at 609-292-3965.

## For More Information

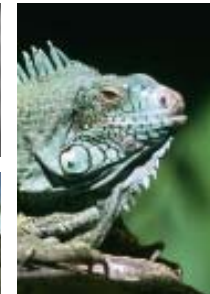
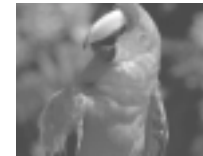
Visit: [njhomelandsecurity.gov](http://njhomelandsecurity.gov)

- New Jersey Department of Agriculture  
[www.NJ.gov/agriculture](http://www.NJ.gov/agriculture)
- New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force  
[www.NJ.gov/oag/dsptf](http://www.NJ.gov/oag/dsptf)
- Humane Society of the United States  
[www.hsus.org/disaster](http://www.hsus.org/disaster)
- New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association  
[www.njvma.org](http://www.njvma.org)



# Plain talk on Protecting Pets

New Jersey's guide to protecting your pets in the event of a disaster



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