



# DISASTER PLANNING FOR DOMESTIC PETS



The safety of your family pets depends on you, especially in an emergency. During severe weather or other emergency situations, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is also unsafe for your pets. Don't leave your pet behind and don't use your pet as an excuse not to evacuate.

The best plan is to identify a safe location that allows pets. Keep in mind that boarding kennels may be without electricity or potable water and have limited personnel and supplies for days to weeks following a disaster.

## Don't put yourself, your family and your pet at risk!

You are responsible for planning for your pet. Just as you should prepare an emergency kit for yourself, you should also prepare one for your pet. If an evacuation is called for, take your pet-emergency kit with you wherever you go. The safety and successful evacuation of your family and pets depends on a good plan and being prepared with the proper supplies.

All of Sarasota County's evacuation centers are pet-friendly, but you must be prepared before you go. Bring a crate for your pet if you plan to stay in a Sarasota County evacuation center. If your pet is not accustomed to being confined, acclimate it to the crate before an emergency to help alleviate stress.

**Sarasota County evacuation centers accept only domestic dogs and cats.**

### What to bring for your pets to an evacuation center:

- One week's supply of food (with can opener if necessary) and medication.
- Enough water for each pet for three days.
- Food and water bowls.
- Current vaccination records.
- Proper ID collar and rabies tag/license and leash.
- Carrier or cage (large enough for your pet to move around in).
- Cat litter, box (small enough to fit in cat carrier) and scooper.
- Plastic bags (for handling waste).
- Disinfectant and cleaning materials.
- Current photo of you with your pet (in case you're separated).
- A comfort item such as a favorite toy, blanket or treats.

# DISASTER PLANNING FOR RURAL ANIMALS

The decision to evacuate your livestock depends on many factors. If they are in a storm-surge area, flood plain, small pasture or urban area where they will be unable to avoid debris or will be in danger of collapsing buildings, you should consider evacuation. The key to a successful evacuation is to do it early.

Decide in advance how you are going to evacuate and, in case you cannot evacuate, how you and your animals are going to cope with potentially no water, electricity and access to assistance for three or four days or more. Write your plan down and keep it in a place with copies of important papers so that you will be ready in the event you must act quickly.


## Prepare your livestock before a storm:


- Know where you can take your livestock in an emergency evacuation. Be prepared to evacuate early. Large vehicles can become difficult and unsafe to drive when winds reach 40 mph.
- Practice loading and unloading your livestock in a trailer. Stressed animals will be harder to handle (and may negatively react to your own stress) during an actual disaster.
- Pack a box with extra halters and leads for each animal, blankets, brushes, wire cutters, medications, bandages, fly spray and other first-aid supplies.
- Keep important documents such as medical records, Coggins tests, photographs and registration papers in a watertight envelope.
- A two-week supply of animal feed for each animal should be stored in waterproof containers.
- Be prepared to treat contaminated water. (Add 2 drops of chlorine bleach per quart and let stand for half hour.)
- If you are forced to evacuate and leave your animals behind, inform friends and neighbors of your evacuation plans and post detailed instructions in several places on your property. You will need to leave water for at least three days and access to quality hay. **DO NOT LEAVE ANIMALS WITH FREE ACCESS TO GRAIN.**
- The safest place for large animals to weather a storm is in a large pasture.
- Label your animals with a non-toxic grease pencil or spray paint with your phone number. Label your contact information onto waterproof luggage tags and attach them to their halters/collars or braid them into the mane or tail.



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