



When Disaster Strikes □ Protect Your Pets

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SOUTH CHARLESTON, W. Va. -- Flooding disasters don't just affect people - they also affect pets, and pets depend on people for their safety. The West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) advise that the best protection for your pet is to plan ahead.

Plan for how you will evacuate your pet:

- Take your pet with you, if possible. Contact your local emergency management office for information on shelters that welcome pets.
- Find "pet friendly" hotels at www.petswelcome.com.
- Ask friends or relatives who live outside the disaster area to care for your pet.
- Leave early-don't wait for a mandatory evacuation order. An unnecessary trip is far better than waiting too long to leave safely with your pet. If you must be evacuated by emergency officials, you may be told to leave your pet behind.
- Make sure your pet has an identification tag that includes your address, phone number and the phone number of a friend or relative living outside the disaster area.

Put together a pet emergency kit containing:

- Water, pet food, can opener and treats;
- Cat litter and litter box;
- Pet medications, medical records and your veterinarian's name and telephone number;
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers so you can move your pets safely and securely;
- Current photos of your pet.

Plan for your pet's safe transportation:

- Condition your pet to being in a carrier.
- Move birds, snakes, lizards, and "pocket pets" like hamsters and gerbils in a secure travel cage or carrier. If the weather is cold, wrap a blanket over the carrier. During warm weather, carry a water mister to mist your bird's feathers from time to time. Certain snakes may need a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad.