



PETS AND HURRICANES

In recent years, providing for pets during a disaster such as a hurricane has become a concern for pet owners. These tips will help you prepare before hurricanes strike to protect your best friends.

- ◆ Prepare a pet disaster kit and keep it in a plastic tub that is easily portable. An ideal kit should include:
 - Food and water for five days (per pet) and a manual can opener if your pet eats canned food.
 - Medications and medical records in a watertight bag.
 - A pet first aid book and supplies could save their life.
 - Cat litter box, litter, scoop, and plastic bags for waste.
 - Strong leashes, harnesses and carriers to transport pets so they do not escape. Carriers should be large enough for your pet to stand up and lie down comfortably, as they may be confined for long periods of time. Include blankets or towels for bedding.
 - Current photos and descriptions of your pets to help if you are separated and to prove ownership if found.
 - Beds and favorite toys to help ease anxiety.
 - Written information about your pet's feeding schedule, medical conditions, behavior issues and the name and number of your veterinarian.

- ◆ Consult your vet about the possibility of using sedatives to ease their distress if severe weather frightens them.
- ◆ Pets are not allowed in shelters, so if you must evacuate with your pet, know ahead of time what hotels will accommodate pets during an emergency. Consider boarding your pets at a kennel in a safe location or with a friend or relative out of the area. If you are leaving for only a few hours, take your pets with you. You may be gone much longer than you planned.
- ◆ Be sure each pet has proper identification such as collars with their name and your contact information on them. Have your pets microchipped by your vet or local humane society. These tiny chips, embedded under the skin, can be scanned if your pet is found.
- ◆ If you have no other choice but to leave your pets at home, see if neighbors who are staying behind can care for them. Leave enough food and water for a week. Pets can panic and escape during a storm through broken windows, open doors and damaged fences.
- ◆ **No pet should be left outside during a hurricane.**
- ◆ After a hurricane, do not allow your pet to wander loose. They can become disoriented and lost if there has been damage to your area. Keep pets on a leash until everything is back to normal. Your pets may be more stressed after a hurricane than you think they are, so keep a eye on them for behavioral and health problems.