

How to Create a Disaster Plan for Your Pets

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household, and, as a pet owner, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have a plan in place for your pets during disaster. The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire, flood, tornado, or hurricane depends largely on emergency planning done today.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an animal emergency supply kit are the same for any emergency. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

Have a Safe Place to Take your Pets

Levy County, like the majority of counties in Florida, cannot accept pets in the emergency shelters. It may be difficult to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area (outside of an evacuation zone) to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency. Many vet facilities have disaster boarding policies, so contact them early to find out the medical requirements for boarding your pets during a disaster.
- **As a last resort**, Levy County Animal Services can board up to five household pets (Dogs and cats only). For health reasons, all pets must have **PROOF** of Rabies and DHPP shots. If you do not have proof, Animal Services will administer the shots for \$10 each shot, each pet. Only cash is accepted and refusal to allow the shots will result in your animals being denied boarding. You should also provide, food, medication, a leash, collar or harness, and if available, a crate for each animal.

Create a Pet Disaster Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you will need essential supplies to care for your pet. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supply kit should include:

- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals cannot escape.
- Photo of you and your pet(s) – in the event you are separated from your pet, having an updated photo with your pet will help validate pet ownership.
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

More information

There is much more information about planning for your pets available through several resources. For links, tips, and much more information, use the following links:

- For general pet preparedness information: <https://www.ready.gov/animals>
- Find pet friendly hotels: <https://www.gopetfriendly.com/>
- Livestock Preparedness: <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Consumer-Resources/Animals/Animal-Related-Emergency-Response>

For more information or questions on how you can be better prepared, contact Levy County Emergency Management at 352-486-5213