



HIGHLANDS COUNTY

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

6850 West George Blvd.

Sebring, FL 33875

863-385-1112

PET PREPAREDNESS

Pet Supply Kit

You already know that it is very important to have a Disaster Supply Kit for yourself and your household. If you have pets, it is imperative that you include supplies for them as well. The following is a list of supplies to have prepared for your pet at all times:

Water!!

Make sure to have clean water stored for your pet in addition to the water for yourself and your household. Plan on a 3-14 day supply—large dogs may need a gallon of water per day, so be generous with this supply. You do not want to ever have to ration water consumption.

Food

Food should be canned or stored in water-tight containers. If you choose canned food, remember to keep a manual can opener.

- Bowls for food and water
- Collar and identification tag
- Leash and/or carrying case
- Medications
- First Aid Supplies
- Toys and treats
- Recent photo
- Sanitary Needs, Litter, Newspapers, Litter Scooper, Plastic Bags, Towels

- Up-to-date health records

Evacuations

If you must evacuate for any type of emergency, don't leave your pets behind. If you are going to the home of a friend or family member, make sure you can bring your pet with you. If you plan to go to a hotel or motel, investigate which are pet-friendly (see Pets and Shelters on our webpage for a list of motels that accept pets). If you plan to go to an Evacuation Shelter, pets ARE NOT permitted inside, so make sure you have alternate arrangements in place. It is crucial that you talk with your friends or family, investigate the motels, and make any other necessary arrangements BEFORE the emergency is upon you. This way, when it is time to evacuate, you already know exactly where your pets will be going and their safety will be protected. No matter where you and your pets go, remember to take your Pet Disaster Supply

Kit.

The following is information about pets and hurricane evacuation centers is provided by the American Red Cross:

Why can't people bring pets to a Red Cross disaster shelter?

Shelters are places of refuge for all members of the community, many of whom have allergies related to pets or who are afraid of certain animals. The Red Cross is concerned about the care, health, and comfort of all people in our shelters. Public health, animal control, physical space, hygiene, and other issues all indicate that animals are best kept separated from congregate shelters.

The American Red Cross will continue to admit to its disaster or evacuation shelters individuals with disabilities accompanied by their service animals. Pets and other animals, however, cannot be admitted to Red Cross shelters for the reasons cited above. Red Cross cannot operate animal shelters, and animal shelters operated by others cannot be identified with the Red Cross. Disaster Services at national headquarters will continue working with The Humane Society of the United States and with the American Humane Association as they explore options and strategies for animal care before, during, and after disasters.

Shelter in place

If you do not have to evacuate during an emergency and you feel safe staying in your home, first, follow the general guidelines for sheltering-in-place. If you are going to a safe-room, take your pets and your pet supply kit with you. Remember that emergencies can be stressful situations for animals just as for people. Even the most well-behaved pet may take on unpredictable behavior in these situations. Keep your pet on a leash or in a carrying case throughout the disaster. Try to keep their routines as normal as possible.



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PETS

The following information has been prepared by the [Humane Society of the United States](#) in cooperation with the American Red Cross

Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. Here's how you can be prepared to protect your pets when disaster strikes.

Be Prepared with a Disaster Plan

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. But whether the disaster is a hurricane or a hazardous spill, you may have to evacuate your home.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

1. Have a Safe Place To Take Your Pets

Red Cross disaster shelters **cannot accept pets** because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the **only** animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, 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 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; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

2. Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supplies Kit Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. 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 supplies 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 can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- 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.

3. Know What To Do As a Disaster Approaches

- Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.
- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, and try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

Caring for Birds in an Emergency

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

About Other Pets

Reptiles

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site. If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad. When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

Pocket Pets

Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.

A Final Word

If you must evacuate, do not leave your animals behind. Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. (remember, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters.) If there is a possibility that disaster may strike while you are out of the house, there are precautions you can take to increase your pets' chances of survival, but they are not a substitute for evacuating with your pets. For more information, contact [The Humane Society of the United States](#), Disaster Services, 2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.



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PET SHELTER 2007

Highlands County will open the following pet friendly shelter should a hurricane impact our County. The shelter has limited capacity and will be at the following location in Avon Park:

Avon Park Holiness Camp
1001 West Lake Isis Avenue
Avon Park, 33825

The following rules will be required for admittance:

1. Pets that will be accepted in this shelter will be limited to cats and dogs that can be carried in a "pet carrier" or cage designed to carry the pet and are accompanied by the owner of the pet.
2. The owner must provide proof of address verifying that the owner resides in Highlands County.
3. The owner must have the pet's identification tag and the rabies vaccination tag attached to the collar worn by the pet.
4. The owner must have a current photograph of the pet.
5. The owner must have a sturdy leash or harness for your pet.
6. The owner must have water and food bowls for your pet.
7. The pet must be in the pet carrier or cage.
8. The owner must have adequate food for 7 days for the pet.
9. The owner must have any medications the pet might require.
10. The owner must have a pet first aid kit.
11. The owner may bring pet beds and toys if easily transportable.
12. The owner must sign a Hold Harmless Agreement in the form provided at the shelter.

Please contact the Emergency Operations Center (863-385-1112) for a pet registration form or [download the registration form](#), and bring the completed registration form with you when you come to the shelter.

If you would like to volunteer to help staff the pet shelter, please download the [pet shelter volunteer registration form](#) and send it to the Emergency Operations Center. We need qualified volunteers to help staff our pet shelters.