

CARING FOR PETS: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

If a disaster strikes, will you be ready to take care of your dog? Now is the time to plan ahead and stock up on things you'll need. After all, being prepared now will help you take care of your dog during an emergency and prevent additional stress to yourself and your dog. Below is a list of items that you can buy now and have handy in the event a disaster occurs.

Current ID and Pictures

Your dog should always have a proper fitting collar and current identification at all times, as dogs who are frightened tend to run away. Also have an extra collar and leash stashed away with your disaster supplies in case the permanent ones get lost. In your kit, include several extra ID tags, one that is blank for you to write in the phone number and address of a temporary residence, should you need one. Having current photos of your dog is a good idea if he gets lost. At least one of those photos should include you, in the event you must show proof of guardianship.

Food

You should always have a reserve supply of the brand of food your dog eats. Ideally, you want to have enough to last at least a week. If your dog eats canned food, be sure to buy cans that are small enough to use at one feeding, as you may not be able to properly refrigerate any leftover food. It's also a good idea to buy pop-top cans, as you may not be able to find a can opener, although one should always be included in your disaster supplies just in case. Be sure to store food in an airtight, waterproof container and be sure to rotate the food at least once every three months. It's also a good idea to include an extra dog dish and a spoon with your disaster kit.

Water

As with food, you'll need enough drinking water to last at least one week for each dog in your household. Store the water in a cool, dark location and rotate it every few months to keep it fresh. Keep in mind that if tap water is not suitable for humans to drink, it's not good for animals either. Again, keep an extra water dish with your disaster supplies, just in case the other one gets lost in the chaos.

Sanitation

Even though a disaster may have occurred, you'll need the proper supplies, such as a pooper scooper and small trash bags, for picking up after your dog.

Cleaning Supplies

During a disaster, you'll want to have a small container of soap for washing your dog's food and water dishes, as well as some paper towels and other clean up if you house your dog in a crate. Your cleaning supplies should also include a disinfectant.

First Aid Kit

Ask your veterinarian for recommendations on what to include in your first aid kit. Some common items you will want to have on hand include the following: first aid book for dogs, bandages, gauze pads, gauze rolls, antiseptic wipes, emollient cream, tweezers and scissors, cotton-tipped applicators, proper-fitting muzzle and latex disposable gloves.



Medications

If your dog requires long-term medication, be sure to always have at least a two-week supply, as your veterinarian may not be able to help just after a disaster. It's also good to ask your vet if he or she has a disaster plan regarding who can help you get medical care for your dog during the disaster. And be sure to keep your dog's medical records – including vaccinations – with your disaster supplies.

For more information, please visit azhumane.org.

