



# Alabama Veterinary Medical Association

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*Protecting People, Pets and Livestock - Yesterday, Today and Always.*

## PRESS RELEASE

### Prepare Pets for Disaster

#### September is National Disaster Preparedness Month

September 10, 2014

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** - The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association wants to remind pet owners to be prepared for pet care emergency situations. National Disaster Preparedness Month is a good time to remind ourselves to make or update pet supply and first aid kits, and to have a disaster plan for pets as well as family.

"Unforeseen weather conditions can create dangerous situations very quickly and we catch ourselves unprepared. We want to remind people that disaster preparedness for both you and your pet will help prevent injury and possible loss of life," says ALVMA President John Hammons, D.V.M.

Below are some tips to help pet owners prepare for emergency situations when bad weather threatens to strike.

#### Make a Supply Kit

Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for survival, particularly food and water. Consider making two kits to be stored in waterproof containers. In one, put everything your pets will need to stay at home. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you and your pets have to get away. Plus, be sure to review your kits regularly to ensure that their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.

- Pack favorite toys, treats, or bedding in your kit to help reduce the stress on your pet.
- Important Records — Keep a copy of your pets' vaccinations, medical records, veterinarian information and any other important documents in a waterproof container.
- Keep a picture of you and your pet together — If you become separated a picture could help identify your pet and document ownership.
- Other items to include would be towels, pet wipes, pet waste clean-up supplies, small litter box and litter, a flashlight, a can opener and spoon.

#### Arrange a Safe Haven

- Contact your veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels available in the event of an emergency.
- Check with local animal shelters to see if they provide temporary emergency shelter, or identify hotels that allow you to bring your pets
- Choose a designated caregiver outside of your immediate area to take care of your pet.

#### Have a Plan

- Store the emergency kit as close to an exit as possible. Have a pet carrier and leash readily accessible.
- Make sure all pets are wearing collars with current identification or are microchipped. Remember to enroll your pet in a microchip pet recovery network.
- Always bring pets indoors at the first warnings of a storm.
- Consider your evacuation route and call ahead to make arrangements for boarding your pet outside of the disaster area.
- Whenever possible, do not leave pets behind during an evacuation. If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for them. If you must evacuate without your pets, leave enough food and water to last at least 2-3 days. Post a highly visible note in a front window for rescue workers detailing the number and type of pets, as well as where the pets were left.
- Pack a Pet First Aid Kit including: Gauze for wounds, pet food and bottled water, pet prescription medication, adhesive tape, nonstick bandages, towels and cloth, hydrogen peroxide (3 percent), activated charcoal to absorb poison, large syringe (without needle) or eyedropper to give oral treatments, muzzle (for dogs), stretcher (board, blanket or floor mat). Note: Take a proactive approach but always consult your veterinarian.

Should you be separated from your pet, log on to Rescuers.com for a listing of animal shelters in your area. Visit shelters regularly and bring a photo and veterinary records to identify your animal. Post photos of your pet online and on social media. Often websites, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts are created after disasters to help reunite pets with their families. If your pet is injured and has severe bleeding, apply firm, direct pressure over the area until the bleeding stops. Hold the pressure for at least 10 minutes (continually releasing the pressure to check the wound will hamper the clotting). Avoid bandages that cut off circulation. Call your veterinarian immediately.

Preparation can help pets remain safe and will also relieve the stress from owners when severe weather threatens. Having a plan and being prepared significantly increase the chances for all to stay safe and out of harm's way.

Founded in 1907, The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association is comprised of approximately 725 veterinarians from around the state, all committed to protecting People, Pets and Livestock – Yesterday, Today and Always.

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