

Emergency Preparedness with Cats

The time to get prepared for an emergency is not at the first sign of a disaster, yet it's common for people to drag their feet with this planning. The best time to create an emergency strategy and put kits together is right now, while you're thinking about it and able to be calm and logical.

What's the Plan?

You will either be sheltering in place or evacuating to stay with friends, family or in an emergency shelter, so create a plan for all contingencies. Whether you will be evacuating or staying home, keep your cats with you.

- Where will you go if you need to evacuate? Have you discussed your plans with friends/family and are they okay with you bringing your cats?
- Find out which emergency shelters will accept pets.
- Are your cats microchipped? Have you registered your current contact information with the microchip company?
- Make sure each cat is wearing a collar and ID tag.
- Needed: sturdy cat carriers and bedding, litter boxes and litter, a scoop, garbage bags, Feliway to help calm your cats and toys or other creature comforts they might enjoy.
 - Place supplies together into a suitcase with wheels or a large but easy to manage backpack to free up your hands.
 - Leave cat carriers out and make them more inviting for your cats with comfortable bedding, treats and toys inside. The sudden appearance of a carrier could encourage your cats to hide if it has only ever been associated with trips to the vet.
- Food and water for each of your cats for five to seven days, bowls, a manual can opener or pop-top wet food cans, and needed medications. Food and medications should be in an airtight, waterproof container if water will be a concern.
- Make a plan with neighbors in case you cannot get home to your cats.
- Make sure you have a hard copy (in case your phone dies) photo of you *with* your cats so proof that they are yours is not in question. Vet records can also be helpful.
- What is the safest room that is most likely to withstand damage? Store emergency supplies here if you plan to shelter in place, or close to an exit if you plan to evacuate.
- Cat emergency first aid kits
- If you know you'll be sheltering in place for several days and your home is safe to remain in, fill a bathtub with water in case your supply runs low.

Resources

The ASPCA disaster preparedness checklist:

<https://www.asPCA.org/sites/default/files/disaster-preparedness-checklist.pdf>

The Humane Society of the United States:

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/pet-disaster-preparedness>

