

Emergency Preparedness for Your Pets

Emergencies come in many forms. They may require a brief absence from your home, being on your own without power or water for several days, or a full evacuation for several days or weeks. Each type of disaster requires different measures to keep your pet(s) safe. The best thing you can do for yourself and your pet is to be prepared.

Make a Pet Plan

Things to consider when incorporating your pet into your family emergency plan:

- If you are asked to [shelter-in-place](#), bring your pet in from outside to shelter with you (ONLY if safe to do so).
- If you are directed to [evacuate](#), take your family emergency kit and pet emergency kit with you (do not forget your carrier).
- If an emergency happens while you are away from your pet, only return to collect your pet if it is safe. If your pet has water, they can survive for a few days until the emergency stabilizes.
- Make a list of pet-friendly family members and their emergency telephone numbers. The list should also include local contact information and an out-of-area contact in case local phone and mobile networks are overwhelmed.
- If you use a kennel or daycare, find out what their emergency plan and telephone number is and incorporate this into your own plan.

Build a Pet Emergency Kit

In an emergency, you and your pet should be prepared to be self-sufficient for 72 hours. Place all of your kit items inside your pet carrier, so you are prepared to “grab-and-go,” if required. In case you are not home during an emergency, give a trusted friend or neighbour a key and let them know where your pet emergency kit is stored. If you are separated from your pet during an emergency and need assistance gathering your pet, do not forget to mention your pet’s most likely hiding spots.

Key components of your pet emergency kit:

- Sufficient food and water
- Identification and records
- Pet medications or specialty supplies, if required
- Comfort items
- Contact information

Important documents for your pet:

- Make copies of the most recent information for all your pets and store it in your pet emergency plan/kit. Gather recent veterinary information including vaccination records.
- Include information for the nearest emergency vet clinic to your home.
- Keep a recent picture of your pet to help with identification, should you get separated. A photo of you with your pet, with your contact details on the back of the photo, can also be useful.

Click here for a printable [pet emergency kit checklist](#).

Evacuation Preparation

If you must evacuate your home in a crisis, plan for the worst-case scenario. **Note that not all emergency reception centres will accept pets (especially if they do not arrive in a carrier)** and the more exotic pets can pose additional challenges. Although you may think you will only be gone for a day, assume that you may not be allowed to return for several weeks. Having a plan ahead of time will make a difference.

When recommendations for evacuation have been announced, follow the instructions of local and provincial officials. To minimize evacuation time, follow these simple steps:

- Store an emergency kit and leashes as close to an exit as possible.
- Make sure all pets wear collars and tags with up-to-date identification. Your pet's I.D. tag should contain your pet's name, your telephone number and any urgent medical needs. Be sure to write your pet's name, your name and contact information on your pet's carrier.
- If you have not done so already, consider microchipping your pet as a more permanent form of identification. A microchip is implanted in the animal's shoulder area, which can be read by scanner at most animal shelters.
- Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster. Pets can become disoriented and wander away from home during a crisis. It also makes it easier to gather them up if an evacuation is ordered.
- At the first sign of disaster, consider your evacuation route and call ahead to make arrangements for boarding your pet outside of the danger zone.

For More Information

- [Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team](#)
- [Get Prepared](#)
- [Ready.gov](#)

For more information on hazards in Alberta, contact your municipality's Director of Emergency Management of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency at 780-422-9000 (Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton) or visit www.aema.alberta.ca.

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