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Emergency Preparedness

- *Family Preparedness* -

Children & Disasters

Disasters may strike quickly and without warning. These events can be frightening for adults, but they are traumatic for children if they don't know what to do. During a disaster, your family may have to leave your home and daily routine. Children may become anxious, confused, or frightened. It is important to give children guidance that will help them reduce their fears.

Children and Their Response to Disaster

Children depend on daily routines: They wake up, eat breakfast, go to school, play with friends. When emergencies or disasters interrupt this routine, children may become anxious. In a disaster, they'll look to you and other adults for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act. If you react with alarm, a child may become more scared. They see our fear as proof that the danger is real. If you seem overcome with a sense of loss, a child may feel their losses more strongly.

Children's fears also may stem from their imagination, and you should take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid. Your words and actions can provide reassurance. When talking with your child, be sure to present a realistic picture that is both honest and manageable.

Feelings of fear are healthy and natural for adults and children. But as an adult, you need to keep control of the situation. When you're sure that danger has passed, concentrate on your child's emotional needs by asking the child what's uppermost in his or her mind. Having children participate in the family's recovery activities will help them feel that their life will return to "normal." Your response during this time may have a lasting impact.

Be aware that after a disaster, children are most afraid that:

- The event will happen again.
- Someone will be injured or killed.
- They will be separated from the family.
- They will be left alone.
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Advice to Parents

Prepare for Disaster

You can create a Family Disaster Plan and practice it so that everyone will remember what to do when a disaster does occur. Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office, or your local Red Cross chapter for materials that describe how your family can create a disaster plan. Everyone in the household, including children, should play a part in the family's response and recovery efforts. Teach your child how to recognize danger signals. Make sure your child knows what smoke detectors, fire alarms and local community warning systems (horns, sirens) sound like. Explain how to call for help. Teach your child how and when to call for help. Check the telephone directory for local emergency phone numbers and post these phone numbers by all telephones. If you live in a 9-1-1 service area, tell your child to call 9-1-1. Even very young children can be taught how and when to call for emergency assistance. Help your child memorize important family information. Children should memorize their family name, address and phone number. They should also know where to meet in case of an emergency. Some children may not be old enough to memorize the information. They could carry a small index card that lists emergency information to give to an adult or babysitter. Remember, you may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual.

After the Disaster: Time for Recovery

Immediately after the disaster, try to reduce your child's fear and anxiety. Keep the family together. While you look for housing and assistance, you may want to leave your children with relatives or friends. Instead, keep the family together as much as possible and make children a part of what you are doing to get the family back on its feet. Children get anxious, and they'll worry that their parents won't return. Calmly and firmly explain the situation. As best as you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. For example, say, "Tonight, we will all stay

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together in the shelter." Get down to the child's eye level and talk to him or her. Encourage children to talk. Let children talk about the disaster and ask questions as much as they want. Encourage children to describe what they're feeling. Listen to what they say. If possible, include the entire family in the discussion. Include children in recovery activities. Give children chores that are their responsibility. This will help children feel they are part of the recovery. Having a task will help them understand that everything will be all right. You can help children cope by understanding what causes their anxieties and fears. Reassure them with firmness and love. Your children will realize that life will eventually return to normal. If a child does not respond to the above suggestions, seek help from a mental health specialist or a member of the clergy.

Disaster Supplies Kit

There are six basics you should stock for your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container--suggested items are marked with an asterisk(*). Possible containers include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack, or a duffle bag.

Water

- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.
- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).

Food

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:
- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)

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- Triangular bandages (3)
- Non-prescription drugs
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Non-Prescription Drugs

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*
- Flashlight and extra batteries*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes*

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- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Feminine supplies*
- Personal hygiene items*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

Special Items

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons:

For Baby*

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

For Adults*

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

Entertainment

- Games and books

Important Family Documents

- Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:
- Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers

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- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Family Disaster Planning

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services--water, gas, electricity or telephones--were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

1. Find Out What Could Happen to You

- Contact your local Red Cross chapter or emergency management office before a disaster occurs--be prepared to take notes.
- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after a disaster. Animals are not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or day care center, and other places where your family spends time.

2. Create a Disaster Plan

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather, and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
 1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
 2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

3. Complete This Checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.

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- Get training from the fire department for each family member on how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe places in your home for each type of disaster.

4. Practice and Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every six months or so.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuations.
- Replace stored water and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

If Disaster Strikes

Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.

Check for Injuries

Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.

Listen to Your Battery-Powered Radio for News and Instructions Check for Damage in Your Home

- Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities. (You will need a professional to turn gas back on.)
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately.

Remember to

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact--do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

Financial Preparedness

Protect your property

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One of the first things to do is find out what disasters could strike where you live. The following steps can help you reduce the physical destruction to your property if you were to be hit with a disaster. These steps can reduce your insurance costs, too.

- Install smoke detectors to warn of an apartment or home fire.
- Elevate utilities to upper floor or attic.
- Clear surrounding brush to protect your home against wildfires.
- Anchor your house to the foundation, and anchor the roof to the main frame.
- Secure objects that could fall and cause damage in an earthquake, such as a bookcase or hot water heater.
- Install hurricane shutters on windows, and prepare plywood covers for glass doors.
- Cover windows, turn off utilities, or move possessions to a safer location if you have adequate warning of something like a hurricane or flood.
- If your home is in a high risk flood area, on a fault line, or threatened by coastal erosion, consider relocating.
- Have your house inspected by a building inspector or architect to find out what structural improvements could prevent or reduce major damage from disasters.
- If you haven't yet bought a house, you might take construction type into account. Frame houses tend to withstand some disasters, while brick homes hold up better in others.

If you're not sure where to start, you could contact your local fire department if you live in wildfire country. Fire departments will often make house calls to evaluate your property and make suggestions on how to improve safety. In earthquake-prone areas, the local utility can be called upon to come to your location and show you how and where to shut off gas lines or how to elevate utilities to get them above a possible flood.

Conduct a household inventory

Inventory your household possessions by making a list of everything you own. If disaster strikes, this list could:

- Help you prove the value of what you owned if those possessions are damaged or destroyed.
- Make it more likely you'll receive a fast, fair payment from your insurance company for your losses.
- Provide documentation for tax deductions you claim for your losses.

To conduct a thorough home inventory

- Record the location of the originals of all important financial and family documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, deeds, tax returns, insurance policies, and stock and bond certificates. Keep the originals in a safe place and store copies elsewhere. You'll need accessible records for tax and insurance purposes.
- Make a visual or written record of your possessions. If you don't own a camera or videotaping equipment (and can't borrow or rent it), buy an inventory booklet and fill it out, or make a simple list on notebook paper. Ask your insurance agent if he or she can provide one.
- Go from room to room. Describe each item, when you bought it, and how much it cost. If you're photographing or videotaping, have someone open closet doors and hold up items.
- Record model and serial numbers.
- Include less expensive items, such as bath towels and clothes. Their costs add up if you have to replace them.
- Be sure you include items in your attic, basement, and garage.
- Note the quality of building materials, particularly for such furnishings as oak doors or expensive plumbing fixtures.
- Photograph the exterior of your home. Include the landscaping--that big tree in the front yard may not be insurable, but it does increase the value of your property for tax purposes. Make special note of any improvements, such as a patio, fencing, or outbuildings.
- Photograph cars, boats, and recreational vehicles.
- Make copies of receipts and canceled checks for more valuable items.

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- Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork, or other items that are difficult to value. Update the appraisals every two to three years.
- Update your inventory list annually.

Sound like too much work? Computer software programs designed for such purposes can make the task much easier. These programs are readily available in local computer stores. Most important, once you have completed your inventory, leave a copy with relatives or friends, or in a safe deposit box. Don't leave your only copy at home, where it might be destroyed.

Buy insurance

Even with adequate time to prepare for a disaster, you still may suffer significant, unavoidable damage to your property. That's when insurance for renters or homeowners can be a big help. Yet, many people affected by recent disasters have been underinsured-or worse-not insured at all. Homeowners insurance doesn't cover floods and some other major disasters. Make sure you buy the insurance you need to protect against the perils you face.

If you own a home

- Buy, at a minimum, full replacement or replacement cost coverage. This means the structure can be replaced up to the limits specified in the policy.
- Investigate buying a guaranteed replacement cost policy. When and where available, these policies can pay to rebuild your house, including improvements, at today's prices, regardless of the limits of the policy.
- Have your home periodically reappraised to be sure the policy reflects the real replacement cost.
- Update the policy to include any home improvements, such as basement refinishing. Annual automatic increases may not be enough to cover these.
- Buy a policy that covers the replacement cost of your possessions. Standard coverage only pays for the actual cash value (replacement cost discounted for age or use).
- Be very clear about what the policy will and will not cover, and how the deductibles work (the part you pay before the policy pays).
- Check state-operated or federally operated insurance pools if you find it difficult to obtain private coverage because of a recent disaster. Premiums often run higher than market rates, but this is better than no coverage.
- Use your home inventory list to check that your policy's coverage matches the value of your possessions.

If you rent

- If you are renting, consider locating outside a high risk flood area or away from a fault line.
- Buy renter's insurance, which pays for damaged, destroyed, or stolen personal property. Your landlord's insurance won't cover damage to or loss of your possessions. Also, consider special coverage like flood insurance for your belongings.
- Be clear about what a policy will cover. Some policies cover more than others. For example, will the policy pay for living expenses if you have to live somewhere else temporarily, or for damage from sewer backup?
- Comparison shop for the best coverage at the best price. Other than government flood insurance, policies vary from company to company. Policies in most areas are very affordable. Start with the company that insures your car. Discounts are often available if you carry more than one policy with a company.

If you are moving

- Select a home in an area not on a fault line, in a flood area, or at risk from costal erosion.

Consider special coverage

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Insurance for renters and homeowners won't cover certain types of losses. Ask your insurance agent or financial planner about special or additional coverage for the following:

Floods

Homeowner policies don't cover damage from flooding. Call your current insurance company or agent first about getting coverage. If your company doesn't provide flood insurance, call the National Flood Insurance Program at (800) 427-4661, which can provide you with the name of an agent in your area who writes flood insurance. As of 1997, the average premium is \$300 a year for \$98,000 of coverage.

Earthquakes

Premiums typically are high (\$5,000 annually for a \$200,000 home), and deductibles may range from 5% to 20% of the policy's coverage. Still, such coverage may be better than no coverage. (Earthquake coverage for the contents of a home usually is separate. You also may need separate coverage for masonry and plate glass.)

Home offices

Some policies automatically extend coverage to computer equipment and a few other items of business property. Talk to your agent to determine what items would or would not be covered. If necessary, you could buy additional business coverage at a modest cost. Or it may be better to buy a separate small business policy, which would also provide more coverage.

Building codes

Ask your agent about additional insurance to cover the costs of meeting new, stricter building codes. Frequently, after a disaster people get socked with rebuilding costs that are much higher because building codes have changed. All current codes must be met when rebuilding. Consider additional structural improvements that provide more protection.

Other potential problems

This would include problems such as underground mines (located beneath your property) sewer backup, or mudslides.

Big-ticket items

Purchase additional coverage for specific jewelry, collectibles, artwork, furs, or other big-ticket items.

Where to keep cash

After a disaster, you may need cash for the first few days, or even several weeks. Income may stop if you can't work. To help stay solvent, consider the following:

- Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks at home in a place where you can get at it quickly in case of a sudden evacuation. A disaster can shut down local ATMs and banks. The money should be in small denominations for easier use.
- Set aside money in an emergency fund. That can be tough to do on a tight budget, but it can be well worth the effort. The fund can be very helpful, not only in a disaster, but in other financial crises, such as during unemployment or when unexpected expenses like legal fees arise.
- Keep your emergency funds in a safe, easily accessible account, such as a passbook savings account or a money market account.
- Keep some funds outside the local area, since the disaster that affects you could also affect your local financial institutions. A mutual fund money market account in another city or state is one option to consider.
- Keep your credit cards paid off. You may have to draw on them to tide you over.

Use an evacuation box

Buy a lockable, durable "evacuation box" to grab in the event of an emergency. Even a cardboard box would do. Put important papers into the box in sealed, waterproof plastic bags. Store the box in your home where you can get to it

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easily. Keep this box with you at all times, don't leave it in your unattended car. The box should be large enough to carry:

- A small amount of traveler's checks or cash and a few rolls of quarters.
- Negatives for irreplaceable personal photographs, protected in plastic sleeves.
- A list of emergency contacts that includes doctors, financial advisors, clergy, reputable repair contractors, and family members who live outside your area.
- Copies of important prescriptions for medicines and eyeglasses, and copies of children's immunization records.
- Health, dental, or prescription insurance cards or information.
- Copies of your auto, flood, renter's, or homeowners insurance policies (or at least policy numbers) and a list of insurance company telephone numbers.
- Copies of other important financial and family records (or at least a list of their locations). These would include deeds, titles, wills, a letter of instructions, birth and marriage certificates, passports, relevant employee benefits documents, the first two pages of the previous year's federal and state income tax returns, etc. Originals, other than wills, should be kept in a safe deposit box or at another location.
- Backups of computerized financial records.
- A list of bank account, loan, credit card, driver's license, investment account (brokerage and mutual funds), and Social Security numbers.
- Safe deposit box key.

Rent a safe deposit box

Safe deposit boxes are invaluable for protecting originals of important papers. If you don't have a safe deposit box, keep copies in your evacuation box or with family or friends. Original documents to store in a safe deposit box include:

- Deeds, titles, and other ownership records for your home, autos, RVs, boats, etc.
- Birth certificates and naturalization papers.
- Marriage license/divorce papers and child custody papers.
- Passports and military/veteran papers.
- Appraisals of expensive jewelry and heirlooms.
- Certificates for stocks, bonds, and other investments.
- Trust agreements.
- Living wills, powers of attorney, and health care powers of attorney.
- Insurance policies (copies are sufficient).
- Home improvement records.
- Household inventory documentation.

Generally, originals of wills should not be kept in a safe deposit box since the box may be sealed temporarily after death. Keep originals of wills with your local registrar of wills or your attorney.

Deciding on a safe and convenient location is an issue. You may want to consider renting a safe deposit box in a bank far enough away from your home so it is not likely to be affected by the same disaster that strikes your home (for instance, bank vaults have been flooded). Keep the key to the safe deposit box in your evacuation box.

Home safes and fire boxes

Safes and fire boxes can be convenient places to store important papers. However, some disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes, could destroy your home. Usually, it's better to store original papers in a safe deposit box or at another location well away from your home.

If you have time

Some disasters, such as tornadoes or earthquakes, strike with little or no warning. Others, such as floods or hurricanes, may allow some time to prepare. If there is enough time, you could take the following actions:

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- Decide what household items you would put on a very short priority list. For example, imagine you could take only one suitcase or pack a single carload. What would you take? Involve the whole family in this discussion.
- Take jewelry and other small valuables.
- Take irreplaceable heirlooms, mementos, and photos.
- Don't bother with replaceable items such as televisions, furniture, computers, and clothing (except what you need to wear for a few days).
- Be sure, however, to take a battery-powered radio and spare batteries so you can stay informed.
- Take important papers and computer disks if you have a home business.

Whew! These are a lot of ideas. You may not be able to do everything that is suggested--that's OK. Do what you can. Taking even limited action now will go a long way toward preparing you financially before a disaster strikes.

Pets & Disasters

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 who 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.

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- 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 petsitting 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, 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

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Emergency Preparedness

- Family Preparedness -

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.