



Hurricane Joe

Plan for your Pet's Safety

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 as well. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is more than likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse.

1st- You will need to assemble a portable pet disaster supply kit.

It should include (but not limited to) the following: pet food, water, medications, medical records (proof of vaccination), a photo, an ID collar, and leash. In addition, you must have a suitable, portable, pet crate that your pet will be comfortable in.

2nd- Select a safe place to evacuate your pet.

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of the states health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals, like Seeing Eye dogs, which assist people with disabilities, are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. However, in Sarasota County there are some shelters available that are pet friendly. Before there is a need for a disaster plan to take effect, I strongly recommend you familiarize yourself as to which shelters are pet friendly, what the rules are and the required forms you will need to complete. For answers on these questions for the pet friendly shelters in Sarasota County, go to;

<http://allhazards.scgov.net/PetPlan.aspx>.

3rd- Check with hotels and motels outside the effected area about accepting pets during natural disasters.

Some corporate and non-corporate hotels/motels loosen their pet policies under these circumstances, but you must be informed before you evacuate. Issues to inquire about should cover any restrictions they may have on the number, size, and species of pets they will or will not accept.

Also consider friends, relatives, boarding facilities, veterinarians or others living outside the effected area who could shelter animals in an emergency. Don't forget phone numbers and addresses for these resources. I recommend you keep this information with your pets' disaster supplies kit.

Microchips

Animals have an uncanny ability to survive adverse conditions, as witnessed in New Orleans. However, most pets were never reunited with their owners because of the lack of identification. There is a simple solution to this problem; it's called Microchip Animal Identification. MAI is a tiny computer chip which has an identification number programmed into it that links the owner's information with that animal. The chip is encased in a smooth, strong biocompatible glass and is small enough to fit into a hypodermic needle. Once an animal is injected with the chip, he or she can be identified by using a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID). This system provides a positive means of identification if you and your pet ever where separated.

Talk to your veterinarian about this permanent identification system.

Stay safe, stay healthy.

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You may find more information on keeping your pet ready and safe, at the following links;

http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pets_emergency

From the ASPCA

http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/press_releases/the_hsus_offers_preparedness_tips_for_pet_owners_as_tropical_storm_alex_nears_the_east_coast.html

From the Humane Society

<http://www.avidmicrochip.com/answer.htm#2>

From AVID® Microchip (a leading manufacture of animal ID microchips)