

Animal Hurricane Preparedness Guide

Large Animals(Horses)

Quick Tips to be prepared for the next Hurricane.

Brought to you by TAG Equine Services, LLC, Naples, FL.



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Being an animal owner is not only a right and a privilege, but a responsibility. When it comes to Natural Disasters, the responsibility becomes greater. During Hurricane Irma, I experienced and learned first hand, all of the emotions and difficulties of having to evacuate large animals. I also learned a lot from the animals that weathered the storm, and came out great on the other end. With large animals, they are much more difficult and costly to evacuate, but, is the responsibility of you as an owner to make sure that you have a plan, or you know of the plan in place of where your animal is at, should be a priority. Also, with advances in barn building and technology, a lot of places just need to sit tight for a few days and wait out the storm. Here are a few tips to prepare your large animals, specifically horses, for a Hurricane.

- Food and water - At least have a 3 day supply of food and water for the animals. If you feed grain, individually portioning out their meals will help keep things organized. In the event of an evacuation or power failure, it is easier to keep smaller portions fresh and dry, rather than a big open bag. Most people have bins that food is kept in and that works as well. Make sure all of the water tanks and reserve water tanks are full as you may not have power for a few days. While on the road, you WILL be stuck in traffic. Carry a few of the 5 gallon water containers to make sure the horses have fresh water available at all times.
 - Hay - Make sure your hay is stocked. Hopefully you have some grass to turn out on, but if not, store as much hay as you can, up to a weeks worth. For evacuation, only take a few bales for travel. You can buy hay where you are going and have enough to switch your horse over.
 - Have all medications and medical records for the medications on hand. Make sure the medicines are properly labeled and in an airtight, waterproof container. Definitely have injectable, or oral Banamine at the ready. The fluctuations in barometric pressure from the storm, or long travel days on their feet, will most likely have you giving some Banamine at some point. Injectable Banamine should be given IV only. If traveling, It's not a bad idea to just go ahead and give some dewormer paste to help prevent ringworm, or other parasites that can be passed with commercial shipping and boarding.
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- Important Documents - Registration information, vaccination records, an up-to-date coggins, and health certificate. Talk to your veterinarian about microchipping and making sure your microchip is current with contact information. During an evacuation, most states will waive the Health Certificate for a faster evacuation process. If so, make sure you document the day you leave, and check for directions from the Department of Agriculture for instructions on your return.
 - If you are leaving your horses out during the storm, make a waterproof ID tag and braid it into their mane. This will help identify your horse and get it returned to you in case they get out. It's not a bad idea to do it if your horse is in a barn, or is being transported commercially either. The busy hustle and bustle of an evacuation, or stress of riding out the storm can make for a confusing time for some and it will just help keep things organized. Other ways of identification include; painting your phone number on hooves, or on their body, or even clipping your number on their body.
 - Try to keep all of the information, feed, and medications ready to go in a small to medium plastic container. In the event of a swift evacuation, or if your barn becomes damaged, this will help keep everything together and dry. It will aid in the ease of evacuation as well. You may not have a lot of room to spare, depending on the number of horses you are hauling.
 - Trailer - Make sure your trailer is maintained. Having a blown tire, or equipment breaking, is the last thing you want to deal with, so make it your first priority to have the trailer ready to go. Talk to your local mechanic, or check your records to see when it was last serviced. A trailer should be serviced once per year with new grease caps for the bearings, break check, battery/electrical check, and tire check.
 - Sanitation - Keep up with your normal schedule of stall cleaning. You may have to accommodate and adjust if the horses are required to stay in the barn longer, also make sure you have plenty of fresh bedding. Same goes for your trailer and place of short term relocation. Have some disinfectant wipes on hand to keep buckets clean if you don't have access to running water for a few days. Some Bleach based spray is also good to have on hand to spray down stalls and trailers to help prevent contamination or cross-contamination between other animals.
 - First Aid - Along with having some Banamine on hand, having some simple first aid supplies is always a good thing. You can't go wrong with a thermometer, hoof packing, liniment, a cotton roll, disinfectant spray, vet wrap, and elastikon. Also make sure if you use standing wraps, that you have a fresh pair on hand as well.
 - Other things that are helpful to have during a disaster include pictures of you and your animals for identification if they are not already on your current coggins. Keeping a hoof pick and a brush in your emergency go box will also be a huge help. Keeping the horse's feet clean will help them have a more sound trip, and brushing them can help alleviate some of the anxiety that comes with stressful situations. Be observant. Horses are especially sensitive to long hauls, or dramatic drops in barometric pressure that is associated with Hurricanes. During transport or during the actual hurricane, it may be best to skip a few meals with grain, just so it is easier on their system as the weather or surroundings change.
 - FEMA Hurricane Preparedness List for Pets: www.ready.gov/animals, Up-to-date weather: www.weather.com, www.animallaw.info/intro/state-and-federal-disaster-planning-laws-and-pets, Federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act www.freshfromflorida.com, www.aphis.usda.gov