

Emergency Preparedness Plan for Exotic Pets



Get ready now to care for exotic pets during an accident or natural catastrophe that causes great damage or even loss of life, such as blizzard, earthquake, fire, flood, hurricane, mud slide, or tornado.

Preparation well in advance of a disaster event

Consider a permanent form of **identification**, such as microchip or tattoo. This technique is not practical in all exotic pets, however identification dramatically increases the odds of reunification when owners and pets are separated during the chaos of evacuation or an emergency.

Keep a copy of each animal's **medical records** and ensure **vaccinations** are current, when appropriate.

Owners should keep quality frontal and profile **photographs** of their pets on hand to identify the animals during separation. These photos should include any distinguishing markings along with family photos that show ownership in the event you need to claim your pet. Store these pictures in a re-sealable plastic bag with important insurance papers that would be taken away during evacuation.

Familiarize your pets with their **carriers** by loading them into the cages. Use food as an enticement if necessary. When an emergency comes, you want the animal to enter willingly and without delay.

Discuss your disaster plan with **pet sitters**.

In case you are not at home

Preplace stickers on front and back doors to notify neighbors and rescue workers that animals are on the property and where to find your evacuation supplies. Store your pet's disaster kit where it can be easily found and keep nearby of the number, type, and location of your animals.

Free Rescue Alert stickers can be ordered from the [ASPCA](https://www.aspca.org). Some municipalities, security companies, and animal rescues also provide notice stickers upon request.

Before a disaster event

Create a **disaster kit**, including 3-7 days' worth of food and water supplies, water and food bowls, a first aid kit, a 2-week supply of medications, medical records, familiar toys, cleaning supplies like liquid dish soap and paper towels, and a contact card. Also consider including an emergency fund to cover last minute housing of the pet in a veterinary hospital or shelter.

Designate a **family member** to be in charge of animals. Have them practice an emergency drill.

Develop a "mutual aid" agreement or "**buddy system**" with a neighbor, to check on each other's animals during a disaster if one of you are out of the area and cannot return during an emergency. Exchange information on veterinarians and have written authorization on file with your veterinarian, authorizing your pet sitter or "buddy" to get necessary emergency treatment for your animal.

Will all of your animals be able to fit in your **vehicle**? If not, develop an alternate plan.

Identify several possible **locations** where you can take your animals should you have to evacuate. Depending on the species involved, this could include shelters and boarding facilities, veterinary hospitals with boarding space, the homes of friends and family members, and pet-friendly hotels.

General checklist

•	Copy of each animal's medical records	•	Written veterinary authorization for pet sitter and "buddy" (see <i>Before a Disaster Event</i> above)
•	Photograph(s) of each animal	•	Food and water bowls
•	Food: at least 1-week supply for each pet*	•	Water: at least 1-week supply for each pet**
•	Favorite toys	•	Treats that can be easily stored in plastic bags
•	2-week supply of medication	•	First aid kit
•	Extra blanket or familiar bedding, towels	•	Newspaper or some other cage liner or bedding material
•	Appropriately size crate or pet carrier for each animal, labeled with owner's contact information	•	Wire cutters and wire pliers to repair metal emergency transport containers or cages.
•	Cotton sheet or blanket (depending on the season) to place over the carrier(s)***	•	Plastic bags to contain waste
•	Dish soap	•	Paper towels
•	Household chlorine bleach	•	

* Store dry food in an airtight/water-proof container. For canned food, purchase the flip top cans or keep a can opener with disaster supplies.

**Do not let animals drink flood water or any other water sources that may be contaminated. If you are drinking bottled water or purified water during a disaster, that is what your animals should be drinking too

***A cage cover will reduce noise and minimize temperature changes

Exotic companion mammal checklist

• Sipper bottles, as needed	• Small litter box, litter, and scoop for ferrets, rabbits
• Harness, consider for rabbits, pot-bellied pigs*	• Chew toys
• A small cage or secure box can be used to transport small mammals	• Appropriately-sized syringe (1-60 ml syringe)
• Hay, 1-week supply	• EmerAid Intensive Care and/or Recovery formula

Bird checklist

• Small, secure, escape-proof carrier for each animal	• Net
• Spray bottle for misting birds in hot weather	• Include leg band photos, when appropriate

Reptile checklist

• Small, secure, escape-proof carrier or a pillowcase or cloth bag for each snake (plus extra bags)	• External heat source (heating pad, battery-operated heat source or heating lamp, extra batteries, hot water bottle)
• Spray bottle for misting in hot weather	• Water dish large enough for soaking
• Transport amphibians in a water-tight plastic bag or plastic container with ventilation holes.	• Portable digital thermometer and hygrometer

Amphibian checklist

• Pump spray bottle for misting	• Portable digital thermometer and hygrometer
• Dechlorinated water	• Nonpowdered nitrile or neoprene wetsuit gloves***
• Water-tight plastic fish bag or plastic container with ventilation holes, ideally for each individual	• Dechlorinating solution
• Nonpowdered disposable gloves	• Unbleached paper towels

During a disaster event



Cage all pets and continue to feed your animal its regular diet as close to the usual time as possible to minimize stress.

Stay informed of current conditions through [wireless emergency alerts](#) for warnings sent by state and local public safety officials and listen to local officials when instructed to evacuate OR shelter in place.



Load stored emergency gear and animals. Practice safe handling techniques as animals may behave differently during stressful situations.

Turn off electricity, water main, and/or gas



Lock up and get out!

Keep your pet confined and strive to maintain proper sanitation measures as natural disasters can contribute to the spread of some diseases.

Shelter in place

If you must shelter in place, select an interior room with no (or few) windows, if possible. Make sure the selected room is pet-friendly. Remove any toxic chemicals or plants and close off small areas where a pet allowed to roam could either escape or get stuck, such as vents or beneath heavy furniture.

After the disaster event

Keep your pet confined initially. Familiar scents and landmarks may have changed, which can be confusing for animals.

Carefully survey the home environment for contaminated water, sharp objects, and other hazards, like spilled chemicals and exposed wiring. Snakes and other wildlife may be found within the home, especially after flooding. Release pets into a safe, secure environment and monitor them closely. Attempt to re-establish a normal schedule as soon as possible.

Contact your veterinarian **if your pet required first aid** or if you observe signs of injury or illness.

To **find a lost pet**, contact your local animal control as well as local humane societies, animal welfare organizations, and county or state animal response teams. If your pet has a microchip, call the microchip company to let them know your pet is missing and make sure all the information about your pet is current.