

# Emergency Planning for You *and* Your Pet

Hurricanes, like floods, brushfires, and tornadoes, can be frightening things to be caught in (and these tips can be applied to those natural disasters, too). But with some forethought and preparation, you can make things easier and safer for you and your pet.

## 1. Make a Plan

Simply put, be prepared. Decide on a course of action and make sure you can initiate it at a moment's notice. Have supplies set aside in a safe, easily accessible place. It's like having candles or a flashlight under the kitchen sink in case of a black out. You may never need them, but if a blackout happens, there's no need to scramble in the dark, because you know exactly where to go and what to do for light.

## 2. Be a Stickler

Whatever your decision is, stick to it. Otherwise, you may put your pet in real danger. If you decide to leave town at the first sign of warning, then do so as planned. No dilly-dallying. Changing your mind or changing the plan often leads to unnecessary accidents, as you're no longer prepared.

## 3. Get Your Kit On

A pet savvy emergency kit isn't that much different to yours. Enough water for three days, non-perishable food (include a can opener if needed), a solid carrier, litter, litter box, puppy pads, plastic bags, medicine and medical records for both you and your pet in waterproof containers, extra leash, harness or muzzle and a picture of your pet on you in case the worst happens and you get separated. Tags and/or microchipping your pet will also make it easier to recover, should it get lost. You must bring your pet in a crate with room enough for them to turn around.

## 4. Staying In

If you're staying home to ride out the storm, keep your pet in its carrier or on a leash. You never know when you might be forced to evacuate. And even if that doesn't happen, you don't want to be tracking down a petrified pet during the chaos. Therefore, secure your pet *before* the storm hits.

## 5. Going Out

Stay tuned to the news reports. If you're told to evacuate, you must do so at first warning. Moreover, it helps to have everything ready to go. We suggest a backpack that holds all the essentials for you and your pet. And make sure you know ahead of time exactly where all the pet friendly shelters are and how to get there.

## 6. Stay Calm

Whether you leave early, choose to stay, or are required to evacuate due to the storm's severity or due to house damage, remember to stay calm. Your pet can sense your emotions, so a calming demeanor can lead to a less-panicked pet. Oh, and don't forget to speak to your pet in a calm, soothing voice, too. Good luck, and stay safe.