



Pets in Emergencies Are You Prepared?

Emergencies and disasters can happen at any time so it's essential that every New Zealand household is prepared. It's important that your pets are included in emergency planning!

Three essential steps to prepare for an emergency:

- 1 Create an emergency household plan with the help of your family and friends that you can follow during an emergency.
- 2 Prepare a home survival kit: this should include provisions (up to five days) for your family including pets.
- 3 Prepare a get-away kit: this should include provisions for your pets and be portable, lightweight and stored in an easy to reach location for quick access.

Remember to check your kits regularly for expired items; particularly food, water and medicines. Replace the water every six months to keep it fresh.

If you need to evacuate you must take your pets with you. Remember if it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for them. Pets are not allowed in public emergency shelters; however, local council may have an area nearby where your pets can stay. Make arrangements to stay with friends or family outside of your area and identify other animal friendly accommodation (e.g. pet friendly hotels, campgrounds, AirBnB) where you might stay.

Use the following checklists to help you, and your pets, prepare for an emergency:

Emergency Plans

- Plan for a family member or friend, who knows your pets, to care for them if you are unable. Have a plan to contact that person. Put their full name, address and contact number in a waterproof container inside your home survival kit.
- Let that person, and a neighbour, know the location of your home and get-away kits. If you are not home when an emergency occurs, they can feed and attend to your animals in the interim (if it is safe to do so). Let them know where the spare house keys are located or give them their own key in case the hiding place is destroyed in an emergency.
- Keep a list of "animal friendly" shelters such as hotels, motels, kennels, catteries or local vet centres in your home and get-away kits. Note that you may need to provide veterinary records before they will accept your animals.
- Discuss your emergency plan with your household so everyone knows what to do and has saved all the relevant information (e.g. contact details). Make sure a copy of the plan is readily available (e.g. post it on the fridge).
- Practice your plan by getting your household and pets to a designated safe place in your house as quickly as possible; ideally your home and get-away kits will be located in this area. Practice how quickly you can evacuate the house, remembering to do a practice run in the dark in case the emergency happens at night and there is no power.

You can find out more about preparing for an emergency on the NEMA Get Ready and MPI Animals in Emergencies websites: www.getready.govt.nz and www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/animals-in-emergencies/

Suggested items for your home and get-away kits

○ Food and water (plus bowls)

Store at least five days of water and non-perishable animal food (canned or dried) in an airtight or waterproof container and remember the can opener! Try to use the same as what you normally feed your animals and include some treats. Remember that animals can drink more water than usual when stressed.

○ Records

Store copies of veterinary and medical records, vaccination records, registration and microchip details in a waterproof container. Include your vet's name and phone number.

○ Medicines

Store any medical supplies and special dietary needs or supplements in a waterproof container.

○ Animal first aid kit

Including items such as cotton bandage roll and tape, scissors, tweezers and latex gloves. Talk to your vet about any specific first aid requirements. This kit is separate to your family's kit.

○ Blanket/bedding

Use items that provide a familiar smell as that can be reassuring for your animal, and don't forget to include a toy.

○ Sanitation

Include pet litter, a litter box and other useful items such as newspapers, paper towels, poo bags, gloves and household bleach.

○ Cage/carrier

The cage/carrier should be sturdy (not cardboard which may disintegrate if it gets wet) and large enough for your animal to stand comfortable, turn around, lie down and have adequate ventilation. Your animal may have to stay in the cage/carrier for a period of time. Each carrier should be labelled with your animal's name, your name, contact number and address.

○ Lead/collar/harness/muzzle

Make sure the equipment is sturdy and labelled with your pet's name, your name and contact number. Even if your dog is friendly they may need to be muzzled, emergency personnel may refuse to handle them unless they are restrained.

Identification

○ Attach an ID tag to your animal's collar with their name, your name, contact number, and if there is enough room, your address. Include a backup tag in your home and get-away kit.

○ Make sure your animals are microchipped and that dogs are registered and wearing their current registration tag. Keep your personal details up-to-date on relevant microchip databases, including next of kin or someone outside of your household/area. Store a copy of all documentation in a waterproof container in your home and get-away kit.

○ Store a current photograph of you and your animal(s), in a waterproof container in your home and get-away kit. Be sure to include notes on distinguishing features, name, sex, age, colour and breed of your animal.

○ Save all of your important information online so that you can access this from any location. Including microchip and registration information, photographs, medical and veterinary records and contact details.

As an owner you are responsible for your pets. During an emergency you need to make sure you and your family, including your pets, are safe. If you have to evacuate take your pets with you!