

companion animals many people rely on for help with daily activities.

When disaster strikes, our national love affair with pets can lead to tragedy. Some ill-prepared owners evacuate without their animal companions, unintentionally causing the death of that beloved pet. Other pets survive abandonment but are never reunited with owners frantically searching for them. Owners learn too late that they cannot bring pets into a crowded rescue helicopter or boat. Saddest of all are the owners who refuse to leave their animals behind and stay with them rather than evacuate, choosing to risk their own lives.



Many people say a spiritual bond connects them with their pets. If your animals are true members of the family,

they must be included in your family's emergency plan.

You can take small steps every day to become better able to survive an emergency. Read NOD's general brochure, "Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Disabilities." Identify your resources, develop a support network, make a plan, and create a Ready Kit and a Go Bag. **Start today to become better prepared, safer, and more secure.**

More Information

Many of these agencies provide materials in accessible formats and different languages.

National Organization on Disability /Emergency Preparedness Initiative

<http://www.nod.org/emergency>

American Council of the Blind

<http://www.acb.org>

The American Veterinary Medical Association

Downloadable and searchable CD-ROM for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, emergency managers, and others that includes planning templates and other critical information
<http://www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp>

ASPCA

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness>

Disability Preparedness

Information for users of service animals
<http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/ppp/animals.htm>

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov/plan>

Humane Society of the U.S. (Disaster Center)

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center

NOAA Weather Radio

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/special_need.htm

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

<http://www.ready.gov>

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Disaster Readiness Tips for

Owners of Pets or Service Animals

Prepare Yourself



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To be better prepared as a nation, we all must do our part to plan for disasters.

Individuals with or without disabilities can lessen the impact of a disaster by taking steps to prepare before an event occurs.

This brochure is designed to help people with pets or service animals plan for emergencies.

Americans love pets. Forty-five percent of U.S. households own at least one dog, and thirty-eight percent own at least one cat. Additionally, there are 10,000-12,000 assistance dogs at work, of which 7,000 are guide dogs. This does not account for other unreported assistance and



Service Animals are Not Pets

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.” They are not pets. Their jobs include: guiding people who are blind; alerting people who are deaf or hearing impaired to doorbells, fire alarms or a baby’s cry; pulling wheelchairs for people with mobility impairments; protecting a person who has seizures; and performing a therapeutic function for persons with mental illness or autism. The overwhelming majority of service animals are dogs, but a few horses have been trained to guide people who are blind, and a small number of monkeys assist people with quadriplegia.

Although service animals should wear identifiable collars, the ADA does not require identification, licenses, or training. Unlike pets, service animals may enter a wide range of public accommodations with their owners, such as stores, restaurants, museums, and transportation systems. A service animal can be excluded from such places only if its behavior is a direct threat to the life or safety of people, or if it becomes a

nuisance, for example, by incessant barking. The animal’s owner is responsible for its behavior and for supplying any food, water, or medication it may need, even during a disaster. In times of disaster, a service animal is permitted in a shelter, clinic, or any other facility related to the emergency, such as a Federal Recovery Center.



Ready Kit and Go Bag

A Ready Kit is a supply of items that you will need if you should have to shelter in place or rely on your own resources for a few days. A Go Bag has fewer items, but they are the essential ones to take with you if you must evacuate quickly. See NOD’s booklet, *Planning for Hazards: A Guide for People with Functional Needs*, for a list of suggested supplies.

Consider including the following items in a kit for your pet or service animal:

- Two-week supply of water in plastic gallon jugs
- Cage/carrier (for each animal, labeled with contact information)
- Veterinary records (especially rabies tag and record and proof of ownership)
- Favorite toys, treats, blankets
- First aid kit and manual (call your vet)

Fire

Home fires remain the most common and most deadly emergency in America. Each year, people die when they return to a burning house to rescue pets. Don’t do this; let firefighters make the rescue—it’s a part of their job.

Consider the following:

- Purchase stickers for doors and windows indicating number, type, and probable location of animals. Change stickers as the number of pets in your household changes.
- If possible, confine animals to a particular room each time you leave home, no matter how briefly. You will know where they are and may be able to direct firefighters if a fire starts in your absence.
- If you can’t keep your pets in one place, remember where they usually go to sleep or hide. That’s where they are likely to be in case of fire, unless prevented by smoke or heat.
- Time permitting, remove animals from a burning house on a leash or in a carrier. Make sure your animals wear nonbreakable collars with current license and vaccination tags.

- Leash, collar, harness (for each animal)
- Litter, litter pan, litter scoop
- Manual can opener and spoons
- Muzzles (dog or cat)
- Newspaper (for bedding or litter)
- Nonspill food and water dishes
- Paper towels and plastic baggies
- Stakes and tiedown
- Contact information for your veterinarian
- Animal’s medication

- Place muzzles, handling gloves, catch nets, and animal restraints where firefighters can easily find them.
- Keep animal health and ownership records (including a photo of you with your animal) in your Go Bag, so you can quickly grab them upon exiting. Put a copy of the records in a safe location away from your home.
- If possible, keep a copy of the pet records with a friend because you may not have time to get it in a fire.

TIP Include pets or service animals in your emergency plan now. Don’t wait until real disaster narrows or eliminates choices.

Sheltering

During large emergencies, shelters are made available to the public. These shelters, usually operated by groups like the local American Red Cross chapter, can save your life, but are a last resort for those who have no other alternative. These shelters are open to service animals, but, unless indicated, they are closed to pets.

Pet-Friendly Shelters?

Pet-friendly shelters generally are of two types: a facility designated for animals at some distance from the shelter for people, or a single building for people and pets. However, pet-friendly shelters are very rare. To find out if any are available in your community, contact your local emergency management agency. If none is planned, you might suggest the idea and offer your services as a volunteer to find a solution.