



## Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services

1390 W. Expressway 83 San Benito, Texas 78586 (956) 247-3685 Office (956) 361 8230 Fax

*Esmeralda Guajardo, MAHS, Interim Health Administrator*  *James W. Castillo II, MD, Health Authority*

### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR PETS**

#### **PLANNING FOR A DISASTER**

Planning is the most effective way to mitigate disaster. If you own pets, you realize that they are family and thus, deserve some focus during your family disaster planning. Pets, just like their owners, require their own supplies that should be placed in a disaster kit. Do not think that because you do not live in a flood plain, coastal area or earthquake fault line that disaster will never strike your family and pets. Planning ahead and designating evacuation routes with alternative shelter information for your family and pets reduces anxiety from a disaster event.

#### **Evacuation**

- If you evacuate, take your pets! If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for them either. You do not know how long it will be before you are able or allowed to return to you home.
- Leave early to ensure safe and unrushed arrival to your destination. If you wait to be evacuated by emergency officials you may be forced to leave your pets behind.
- Determine where you will shelter with your pets ahead of time. Do not assume a shelter will allow animals. Call area hotels and motels to find out if pet rules will be waived for an emergency. Staying with family or friends outside the immediate disaster area is another more preferable option.
- Remember to bring your pet(s)'s disaster kits during evacuation.
- Keep dogs on leashes or in crates/carriers and cats in carriers.
- Make sure all pets are wearing identification.

#### **Staying at Home**

- If you choose to stay at home to weather the disaster, bring your pets inside immediately to prevent injury, running away, and undue stress.
- Find a safe place inside your home to stay together.
- Keep cats and dogs separate. The stress of the situation may create abnormal behavior.
- Keep small caged pets separate from cats and dogs.

#### **PETS DISASTER KIT ESSENTIALS**

The following list of items should be assembled in an easy-to-carry waterproof container. Refresh items like food, water, and medications as needed and according to expiration and freshness dates indicated on the items' containers. Consult your veterinarian for a pet first aid kit and how to use the items that may be contained in the first aid kit.

There should ideally be one disaster kit per pet.

- Two-week supply of food (dry and canned) and water;
- Two-week supply of water in plastic gallon jugs;
- Batteries (flashlight, radio);
- Cage/crate/carrier labeled with owner contact information and feeding instructions;
- Manual can opener;
- Copies of veterinary records and proof of ownership (picture of you with your pet);
- Emergency contact list;
- Familiar comfort items like toys, blankets, and treats;
- First aid kit;
- Flashlight;
- Diet and medication instructions as detailed as possible, including what not to feed if your pet has allergies;
- Leash, collar/harness;
- Litter, litter pan, and scoop;
- Plastic, sealable bags for disposing of solid waste;
- Muzzle;
- Newspaper for bedding or litter;
- Nonspill, shatterproof food and water dishes;
- Paper towels;
- Radio;
- Spoon; and
- Regular size trash bags.

## **AFTER THE DISASTER**

Above all else, stay calm and stay informed by listening to the radio or television. Do not panic. Follow directives provided by local, state, and/or federal emergency personnel who are reacting and responding to the situation. Stay in your home until advised that it is safe to venture outside to prevent injuring yourself. Debris may be scattered, flood waters may have encroached, power lines may be down, or other contaminants may be present.

Keep your pets leashed in the first few days following the disaster as familiar scents and landmarks may be absent or altered. Be patient with your pets after a disaster and try to get them back to their normal routines as soon as possible. If behavioral problems persist, talk with your veterinarian.

If you must leave after a disaster, take your pets with you.

*For additional information, please contact Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Health Program at (956) 247-3599 or e-mail: [Environmental.Health@co.cameron.tx.us](mailto:Environmental.Health@co.cameron.tx.us)*