

EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE PETS OR SERVICE ANIMALS

It is equally important to prepare our pets and animals for emergencies just as we would for any other member of our families. It is state law that we care for all of the needs of our animals including emergency preparedness.

General Safety Tips

- Have your animals vaccinated because many shelters will not accept an animal that is not vaccinated.
- Having your animal microchipped will help with identification if you get separated during emergencies.
 - Make sure the contact information is up-to-date.
- Pet collars should have an ID tag on them.
- Take pictures with you and your animal to be able to confirm ownership if you ever get separated.
- Know where your animals usually hide if you need to find them quickly.

Making the decision to stay or leave

All plans must consider all of the animals you have.

Staying

- What supplies do you need to maintain the animal's health and wellbeing?
 - Remember the first 96 hours are on you.
- Does the animal need to be moved indoors due to weather conditions?

Leaving

If it is not safe for you to be in your home, it is not safe for your pet either.

- Pet supplies to have prepared if leaving your home:
 - kennel labeled with pet and owners' names and contact information
 - leashes
 - food
 - bowls for water and food
 - bags for waste
 - cat litter/pan
 - medications
 - copies of medical records
 - toys to avoid boredom

Transportation

- Does your transportation have enough space for your animal(s)?
- It is generally safest to travel with animals in a cage or kennel.
 - Travel can be stressful and cause animals to act erratically or jump from vehicles when the door is opened.
- Practice traveling with your animals in their carriers.

Sheltering

Know a safe place to bring your pets.

Before an emergency or disaster, you will need to call hotels, family, friends, and/or your local Office for Emergency Preparedness (OEP) to find out if they allow animals and which types of animals they allow.

Service Animals

Since March 15, 2011, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal is defined as:

- A dog individually trained to perform tasks for a person with a disability.
- A miniature horse, in certain cases, if they can be safely accommodated.

There are two questions that can be lawfully asked of the handlers/owners of service animals. These questions are:

- 1) Is this animal required because of a disability?
- 2) What tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

- Staff **cannot** require:
 - Proof of training or certification
 - Medical records or disability documentation
 - Proof of registration or licensing

If the handler refuses to answer those questions, the animal will be treated as a pet rather than a service animal.

Emotional Support or Therapeutic Animals

Emotional or therapeutic animals are not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are not covered by federal laws protecting the use of service animals.

Therefore, they are subject to the same considerations as pets.