

# PET/SERVICE ANIMAL PREPAREDNESS

FACILITATOR GUIDE



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## ACTIVITY: PROTECTING PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to help individuals plan for the safety of their pets and service animals if a disaster occurs.

### Objectives:

- Identify the unique needs of pets and service animals during a disaster.
- Establish a plan for evacuating and caring for pets and service animals during a disaster.

**Preparation and Needed Materials:** Prior to conducting this activity, you may want to:

- Ask local animal advocacy organizations and shelters to participate in the presentation or provide literature about their services.
- Assemble a model pet/service animal disaster kit and plan.

### Presentation Tips:

- Welcome participants to the session.
- Ask the participants to introduce themselves and think of one word that best describes how they feel about their pets/service animals. During a disaster, we want to make sure our pets and service animals will be safe.
- Next, ask participants: What would your pets or service animals need if you had to evacuate your home? Acknowledge the responses. If possible, record the list of needs on chart paper or a white board.

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### Presentation Tips: (Continued)

- Distribute the Protecting Pets and Service Animals handout. Show your model disaster kit and model techniques as you explain the following preparedness key points:
  - **Identifying Potential Shelters.** Contact your local emergency management office, animal shelter, or animal control office to get advice on where pets/service animals can go during a disaster. Make a list of hotels or kennels that would allow you to bring your types of pets. Make sure to research hotels in areas outside your immediate neighborhood. Check with friends and relatives to see if they would be willing to provide shelter to your pets/animals.
  - **Developing a Pet/Animal Disaster Kit.** Include emergency food, water, travel bowls, safety harnesses/leashes, carriers/cages, first aid items, medicines, sanitary supplies (cat litter, trash bags, etc.), toys/blankets/bedding, etc. Add a copy of veterinary records including immunization cards.
  - **Ensuring Proper Identification.** Make sure that each pet/service animal has a current identification tag. Have a current photo of your pet/service animal in your personal emergency kit. Photos will help reunite you in case you become separated.
  - **Practicing Your Evacuation Plan.** Look for pets during severe weather to see where they may hide. Knowing their hiding places inside and outside the home will speed up your evacuation process. Get a flashing collar to help locate your pet in case of darkness. Use a trip to the veterinarian or other event to practice securing your pets/service animals. Time how long it takes. Figure it will take longer during a crisis.
  - **Sheltering in Place.** If you are unable to evacuate, make sure to get your pets/service animals to the safest point in the home. Some pets do better if they are in their crates, away from windows, or with covers on cages. Think through what would be most comforting. Place pet rescue decals on windows and doors to alert rescue teams.
  - **Reducing Hazards After a Disaster.** Understand that following a disaster, pets/animals may become defensive or fearful. Keep pets/service animals in control or confined until you know they will be safe. Be aware of hazards such as debris, chemicals, and other substances that could harm them.
- Thank the participants for attending the session.

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## PROTECTING PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS: HANDOUT



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Most of us consider our pets and service animals as extended members of our family. We depend on them for companionship and service. In turn, they depend on us to be prepared to protect their safety and well being during a disaster.

Complete these simple steps to help protect your pets and service animals:

#### **Identify Potential Shelters.**

- Contact your local emergency management office, animal shelter, or animal control office to get advice on where pets/service animals can go during a disaster.
- Make a list of hotels or kennels that would allow you to bring your types of pets. Make sure to research hotels in areas outside your immediate neighborhood. Note: Most hotels allow service animals.
- Check with friends and relatives to see if they would be willing to provide shelter to your pets/animals.

#### **Develop a Pet/Service Animal Disaster Kit.**

- Include emergency food, water, travel bowls, safety harnesses/leashes, carriers/cages, first aid items, medicines, sanitary supplies (cat litter, trash bags, etc.), toys/blankets/bedding, etc.
- Add a copy of veterinary records including immunization cards.

#### **Ensure Proper Identification.**

- Make sure that each pet/service animal has a current identification tag.
- Have a current photo of your pet/service animal in your personal emergency kit. Photos will help reunite you in case you become separated.
- Have your pet tattooed or implanted with a microchip to enable identification if lost.

#### **Practice Your Evacuation Plan.**

- Look for pets during severe weather to see where they may hide. Knowing their hiding places inside and outside the home will speed up your evacuation process.
- Get a flashing collar to help locate your pet in case of darkness.
- Use a trip to the veterinarian or other event to practice securing your pets/service animals. Time how long it takes. Figure it will take longer to evacuate your pets/service animals during a crisis.

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### Plan to Shelter in Place.

- If you are unable to evacuate, make sure to get your pets/service animals to the safest point in the home. Some pets do better if they are in their crates, away from windows, or with covers on cages. Think through what would be most comforting.
- Place pet rescue decals on windows and doors to alert rescue teams.

### Plan for After the Disaster.

- Understand that following disasters, pets/animals may become defensive or fearful. Keep pets/service animals in control or confined until you know they will be safe.
- Be aware of hazards such as debris, chemicals, and other substances that could harm them.

### EVACUATING OTHER TYPES OF ANIMALS

<b>Small Animals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a secure, covered carrier or cage to transport most small mammals (ferrets, hamsters, gerbils, rats, mice, guinea pigs, etc.).</li><li>• Make sure to include necessary dietary supplements, exercise equipment, and extra bedding materials.</li></ul>
<b>Large Animals</b>	<p>If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster. Use the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all animals have some form of identification.</li><li>• Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.</li><li>• Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers. (Note: It is best to allow animals a chance to become accustomed to vehicular travel so they are less frightened and easier to move.)</li><li>• Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care, and handling equipment.</li></ul> <p>Note: If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or turn them outside.</p>

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PROTECTING PETS AND  
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## EVACUATING OTHER TYPES OF ANIMALS

<b>Birds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use small, secure, covered carriers to avoid injury when transporting. Note: If traveling in cold weather, always warm the interior of your vehicle before moving your bird(s) from the house to the vehicle.</li><li>• Transfer your bird(s) to a standard cage upon arrival at the evacuation site; covering the cage may reduce stress; this transfer should occur in a small, enclosed room to reduce the risk of escape. Note: Birds should be kept in quiet areas and not allowed out of the cage in unfamiliar surroundings. Fresh food and water should be provided daily, and a hot water bottle for warming birds in cold weather.</li></ul>
<b>Reptiles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a pillowcase, cloth sack, or small transport carrier. Note: Because most reptiles do not eat daily, feeding during evacuation circumstances may increase stress.</li><li>• Transfer your pet to a secure cage at the evacuation site as soon as possible and if appropriate. The enclosure should, if possible, be placed in a controlled environment, away from areas of heavy traffic, loud noises, and vibrations. Make sure that the container housing the reptile is escape proof.</li></ul>
<b>Amphibians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use watertight plastic bags, such as the ones used for pet fish transport, or plastic containers, such as plastic shoeboxes or plastic food containers with snap-on lids to transport amphibians.</li><li>• Take care to monitor water and air temperature, humidity, lighting, and nutrition during the time that the animal will be in the evacuation facility.</li><li>• For terrestrial or semiaquatic amphibians use a tiny amount of water, or moistened paper towels, clean foam rubber, or moss as a suitable substrate.</li><li>• For aquatic species, fill the plastic bag one-third full of water, then inflate the bag with fresh air and close with a knot or rubber band. It is best to use clean water from the animal's enclosure to minimize physiologic stress.</li><li>• Take an extra container of water, clean moist paper towels, or clean moss as appropriate in case any of your pet's containers break or leak.</li></ul>