

Hurricane Pet Safety Guide

Essential Steps to Protect Your Pets During the Storm



Prepare, Protect, and Stay Safe – Keeping Your Pets Safe Before, During, and After a Hurricane



Digital Empathy

Your safety and your pet's well-being are our top priorities.

Hurricanes can be unpredictable and dangerous, and it's important to follow evacuation orders and stay informed about the latest weather updates. If you're in the path of a hurricane, make sure to monitor your local advisories through resources like the NOAA Hurricane Watches and Warnings.

We want to help you be as prepared as possible for any situation. Whether you're evacuating or sheltering in place, we've put together this Hurricane Pet Safety Guide to ensure you and your pets are ready to weather the storm. Be proactive and use this guide to protect your pets, keep them safe, and help them cope during stressful situations.

For additional tips, see the [American Red Cross's Pet Disaster Preparedness Guide](#).



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Preparing to Evacuate or Shelter in Place

When a hurricane is approaching, it's important to be prepared, whether you need to evacuate or shelter in place. Ensuring your pets' safety is a top priority, and having the right plan and supplies in place, can make all the difference. Check out our emergency kit and pet first aid checklist to make sure you're fully prepared.

Here are some key steps to take:

- **Secure Loose Outdoor Items:** High winds can turn objects into dangerous projectiles, so be sure to tie down or store items like outdoor furniture.
- **Reinforce Windows and Doors:** Protect your home and pets from shattered glass and debris by reinforcing windows and doors.
- **Create a Safe Space Indoors:** Designate a storm-safe room where you and your pets can stay together. A windowless area, such as a bathroom or basement, is ideal. Consider battery-powered white noise machines or playing music if your pet is sensitive to loud noises.
- **Prepare Lighting:** Keep lanterns and flashlights on hand in case of power outages. Avoid using candles, especially strongly scented ones, which could harm pets. If necessary, ensure candles are placed well out of reach.

Being proactive and following these steps will help ensure both you and your pets are safe and prepared during the storm.

10 Essential Items for Your Pet Hurricane Emergency Kit

01

Food and Water (7-day minimum supply)

Stock enough food and water for at least seven days, in case you can't return home immediately. Don't forget bowls and portable water dishes. Add treats, dental chews, or other fun edible items to help your pet feel more comfortable. If you run out of water or cannot boil water, you need a way to create safe drinking water. Look into the various methods of filtering and purification to see what works best for you.

02

Medications and Medical Records

Include at least a week's supply of all medications. Keep updated medical records, vaccination documents, and prescriptions for anxiety medication handy. Consider calming pheromones, like Adaptil for dogs and Feliway for cats, to help provide a relaxing environment.

03

ID Tags and Microchip Information, GPS collar

Make sure your pet's ID tags are up to date and that their microchip information includes your current phone number as well as an emergency contact. Have a recent photo handy in case your pet becomes lost- you don't want to waste your phone battery looking for an image. Add a GPS collar and you'll be able to find your pet's location by satellite- this can be a lifesaver if you get separated.

04

Reflective Items, Leashes, Harnesses, and Extra Pet Carriers

Bring extra leashes, harnesses, and pet carriers in case of breakage or loss. These can also come in handy if you need to help others with pets in an emergency. Reflective collars, leashes, and vests can be critical in low-visibility situations.

05

Comfort Items

Familiar scents and textures can greatly comfort pets during stressful events like hurricanes. Bring along their favorite blanket, bed, a sweater that smells like their favorite person, or a well-loved toy to provide a sense of security. These familiar items can help soothe your pet and create a calming environment, even in unfamiliar or chaotic situations.

06

Waterless Shampoo and Extra Towels

Keep a bottle of waterless shampoo for cleaning off mud, dirt, or any messes like diarrhea when water may not be readily available for baths. Keep extra towels around to help keep everyone clean and dry.

07

Pet First Aid Kit and Manual

A first aid kit is essential for addressing minor injuries or health issues during a hurricane, especially when access to veterinary care may be limited. Having basic medical supplies on hand allows you to provide immediate care and keep your pet comfortable until professional help is available.

08

Safety and Repair Items

A fire extinguisher, duct tape, plastic sheeting, rope, heavy-duty garbage bags, hand-crank radios, portable power banks, and extra batteries will come in handy if a fire starts, your window coverings come loose, you lose power longer than expected, or you need to tie down items to avoid losing them.

09

Entertainment

Keeping pets entertained during a storm is important for reducing their anxiety and preventing restlessness. Pack durable chew toys, puzzle feeders, or interactive toys that will keep them occupied in confined spaces. These distractions can help alleviate stress and provide mental stimulation, making the situation more bearable for both you and your pet.

10

Indoor Potty Area and Sanitation Supplies

Stock up on disposable litter trays, puppy pads, and poop bags for easy cleanup if your pet can't go outside. Helpful Tip: Use a small plastic kiddie pool lined with grass sod to create an indoor potty space for your dog if it's too dangerous to go outside during the storm, or if they don't like to go out in the rain.

Pet First Aid Checklist

It's always a good idea to have a **pet first aid kit** ready, especially during emergencies. You should also have a **pet first aid manual** to help you provide care to your pet if needed. Here's what to include:

- ☐ **Gauze pads and rolls** (for wrapping wounds or controlling bleeding)
- ☐ **Non-stick bandages** (to cover wounds without sticking to fur)
- ☐ **Hydrogen peroxide** (3%, for wound cleaning or inducing vomiting under vet guidance)
- ☐ **Antiseptic wipes** (pet-safe, for cleaning wounds)
- ☐ **Antibiotic ointment** (for treating minor cuts and scrapes)
- ☐ **Digital thermometer** (for checking your pet's temperature; normal for dogs/cats is between 101°F and 102.5°F)
- ☐ **Tweezers** (for removing splinters or ticks)
- ☐ **Tick remover tool** (for safely removing ticks)
- ☐ **Scissors** (blunt-tip, for cutting bandages or fur around wounds)
- ☐ **Vet wrap** (self-adhesive, flexible bandage wrap)

Checklist continued on next page

Pet First Aid Checklist cont.

- ☐ Instant cold packs (to reduce swelling or pain)
- ☐ Sterile saline solution (for cleaning wounds or flushing eyes)
- ☐ Styptic powder (to stop bleeding from minor cuts or nail trims)
- ☐ Latex or rubber gloves (for safe handling of wounds)
- ☐ Muzzle (for safety when dealing with an injured pet)
- ☐ Ear cleaning solution (pet-safe, for cleaning ears)
- ☐ Pet-safe pain reliever (as prescribed by your vet)
- ☐ Medications (specific to your pet, including any regular prescriptions) like Benadryl (plain, for allergic reactions – consult your vet for dosage) and probiotics (Like Fortiflora, for diarrhea and GI issues)
- ☐ Pill popper (to safely administer pills to your pet)
- ☐ Emergency contact information (including your vet, local emergency clinic, and ASPCA Pet Poison Control)

Staying Safe and Sane While Sheltering

Sheltering in place with your pets can be a long and stressful experience, but there are ways to keep your pets calm and entertained while keeping an eye on their health.

Fun Games to Play with Your Pet Indoors

- **Hide and Seek:** Hide your pet's favorite toys or treats around the house and encourage them to find them. For extra fun, hide yourself too and let your pet search for you!
- **Interactive Toys:** Use puzzle feeders, snuffle mats, frozen lickymats and filled Kongs, or treat-dispensing toys to keep your pets mentally engaged. Stack together cardboard boxes and make a kitty castle, or put treats in cardboard boxes and let your pet figure out how to get them out.
- **Indoor Agility Course:** Create a mini obstacle course using furniture or cushions for your pet to climb over, crawl under, or jump through. Hula hoops, boxes, and laundry baskets can also make great additions to your course.
- **Variety of Safe Toys:** Have a selection of toys to keep your pet happy, including chew toys, ropes, squeakies, or whatever they love. Consider buying a few new toys to have on hand, and introducing a new one to keep your pet occupied. New toys can distract pets who may be feeling antsy. Remember to supervise your pet with new toys to be sure they don't ingest any parts.

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Fun Games to Play with Your Pet Indoors cont.

- **Training Sessions:** Use the extra time to practice obedience training or teach new tricks. Short, fun training sessions not only entertain but also mentally stimulate your pet. Remember not to introduce new treats for this- we don't want diarrhea!

Ten Medical Conditions to Watch For While Sheltering

Being in close quarters or around other stressed pets may lead to some health concerns. Here's what to watch for:

01

Respiratory Infections

(Kennel Cough/Feline Upper Respiratory Infection)

Stock enough food and water for at least seven days, in case you can't return home immediately. Don't forget bowls and portable water dishes. Add treats, dental chews, or other fun edible items to help your pet feel more comfortable. If you run out of water or cannot boil water, you need a way to create safe drinking water. Look into the various methods of filtering and purification to see what works best for you.

02

Parasitic Infestations (Fleas, Ticks, Mites)

In crowded spaces, pets can easily transmit parasites like fleas, ticks, and mites to one another. These pests can cause skin irritation, allergic reactions, and even transmit diseases like Lyme disease or tapeworms, so regular parasite prevention and monitoring are crucial in such environments.

03

Stress-Related Gastrointestinal Issues

Being in close quarters during stressful situations, like a hurricane, can trigger anxiety in pets, leading to behavioral issues or physical symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, or loss of appetite. Avoid introducing new foods or treats. Keep a probiotic in your first aid kit.

04

Musculoskeletal Injuries

In crowded shelters or during emergencies, pets may slip, trip, or get injured while navigating unfamiliar environments. Pets may suffer from sprains, strains, or more serious musculoskeletal injuries such as fractures. It's important to observe pets for limping, difficulty moving, or swelling and to prevent rough play in confined spaces. Having a first aid kit that includes supplies for stabilizing an injured limb can be invaluable.

05

Aggression and Fights

Crowded conditions can increase tension between pets, leading to fights that may result in injuries such as bite wounds, scratches, or torn skin. Proper management, separation when needed, and close supervision are essential to prevent injuries caused by aggressive interactions.

06

Eye Infections and Irritation

In shared spaces with other pets or in dusty, poorly ventilated environments, pets can be prone to eye infections or irritation. Pets with red, swollen, or watery eyes, or discharge, may be suffering from conjunctivitis or other eye-related issues. Prompt cleaning of the area, avoiding pets with symptoms, and seeking veterinary attention can help prevent further complications.

07

Allergic Reactions

Close contact with other animals, cleaning supplies, and new people can expose pets to allergens such as dander, dust, or even certain treats and foods. Allergic reactions may manifest as itching, skin irritation, or respiratory issues, requiring careful monitoring and management to prevent discomfort and secondary infections from scratching. Anaphylactic reactions are rare and require immediate veterinary intervention; if you notice respiratory changes, collapse, vomiting, or other symptoms, find veterinary care as soon as possible.

08

Gastrointestinal Parasites (Giardia, Coccidia)

In crowded environments, pets may be exposed to contaminated food, water, or other pets' waste, increasing the risk of contracting gastrointestinal parasites like Giardia or Coccidia. These parasites can be zoonotic (pass to humans) and cause diarrhea, weight loss, and dehydration, so it's important to practice proper hygiene and sanitation.

09

Dehydration and Heat Exhaustion

In small, poorly ventilated areas, pets can quickly become overheated or dehydrated. Limited access to fresh water or cooling options increases the risk of heat-related illnesses, making it vital to ensure pets have adequate hydration and are kept in cool, shaded spaces.

10

Urinary and Defecation Monitoring

Some pets, especially those who hate storms, rain, or changes to routines, may hold their urine or stool, which can lead to GI distress or urinary tract infections. Cats in particular can be at risk for urinary blockage, a life-threatening emergency that requires immediate veterinary attention.

For more information, see the FDA's [Taking Care of Pets During Hurricanes and Floods](#).

Returning Home After the Storm

Once the storm has passed and it's safe to return home, it's important to remain cautious as you and your pet may face new hazards.

Potential Hazards to Watch Out For

- **Flood Waters:** Flood water can carry dangerous toxins, chemicals, or bacteria harmful to both humans and pets. Avoid letting your pets drink or swim in flood waters, puddles, and other water sources until it's safe.
- **Sharp Debris:** Be on the lookout for broken glass, sharp metal, or wood debris in and around your home. Flooding can hide sharp objects that may cause injury to your pets. Paw protection boots can be extremely helpful to avoid paw injuries.
- **Damaged Fences and Structures:** Check your yard and home for damage before allowing your pets to roam. Ensure all fences are intact and no dangerous objects are within reach.

Medical Issues to Look For After the Storm

- **Skin Infections:** Exposure to floodwaters or dirty environments can cause skin infections or irritation. If you notice excessive scratching or hair loss, contact your vet.

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Medical Issues to Look For After the Storm cont.

- **Gastrointestinal Upsets:** Stress and exposure to unsanitary conditions can cause stomach upset in pets. Watch for vomiting, diarrhea, or lethargy.
- **Urinary Blockage in Cats:** Stress can contribute to urinary blockages in male cats. If your cat is straining to urinate or not urinating at all, this is a life-threatening emergency—seek veterinary care immediately.
- **Injuries:** Examine your pet for cuts, scrapes, or signs of pain after being in unfamiliar or dangerous environments. Seek veterinary care if you find any injuries.

Being prepared for a hurricane can make all the difference when it comes to keeping your pets safe and calm during the storm. By having the right supplies, creating a solid plan, and knowing how to respond to emergencies, you'll be ready to protect all your family members—human or pet. Remember, their safety and comfort depend on the steps you take before disaster strikes.

Concerned about your pet?

As soon as it's safe to do so, schedule an appointment for your pet to be sure they're healthy after the storm. We're here to help!