

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

by Chris Puls

Disasters affect many each year

Although we all like to think, "It will never happen to me," disasters can strike anyone at any time. Each year, two to three million people are affected by disasters. Many of these people own animals and must provide care for these animals and themselves.

Disasters can strike quickly and unannounced. We typically think of disasters as cataclysmic events such as floods, hurricanes, or earthquakes. However, individual family disasters are much more common. It is estimated that the United States suffers more than 150,000 household fires; 10,000 violent thunderstorms; 5,000 floods; 800 tornadoes; many forest fires and several hurricanes and earthquakes every year.

What you can do

Often you cannot prevent a disaster from occurring but you can reduce the impact of a disaster. A little planning goes a long way toward reducing injuries, death and suffering. This applies to your pets and yourself. You and your pets will need shelter, water and food. You should also consider the stresses that will be imposed on owners and their pets. Mental health providers are a good resource when the disruption of the daily routine results in pain, fear and confusion.

You are ultimately responsible for the survival and well-being of your pet. You should have an emergency response plan and readily accessible kits with provisions for family members and pets.

There are a number of emergencies that you, your family and your pet should be ready to handle. If everyone has an individual/family emergency plan, this makes it much easier on the county, city, state and federal agencies that may need to be called in to help. If you have a plan in place to take your pet with you then those agencies don't have to risk personnel to get your pets and livestock later. Ultimately, you are responsible for the care of your animals so you need to be prepared to care for yourself first.

There are two main possibilities when an emergency strikes: Evacuate and shelter in place. It is helpful if you have separate supplies for each. By planning for both options, you won't empty your evacuation kit while sheltering in place, only to find out that now you need to evacuate! Some of the emergencies that would cause shelter in place include: Power outage which may be extended and cause evacuation, winter storms, chemical spills (may need to turn off heat or A/C and close all windows), Tornado (if sheltering in place is safe), Disease outbreak, nuclear or biological incident, and civil disturbances/riots. Emergencies that could cause evacuation include: brush or structure fire, tornado (either before it hits or after damage has been done), Flood or flash flood, Hazardous material spill, extended power outage, contaminated water for extended period, disease outbreak, terrorist attack and civil disturbance/riots.

When planning for sheltering in place, it is best to supply yourself with as much as possible in case the needs for sheltering are extended. Past recommendations were for 72 hours (3 days), but new recommendations of 5 days are being considered. In the case of a severe winter storm or blizzard, help and evacuation may be delayed for more than 3 days. It is suggested that your shelter in place supplies are kept in your storm shelter location (basement, closet or bathroom) so that if you get trapped by debris in a tornado for example, you can

survive until help arrives. If your supplies are kept in a portable bin, you can take them with you, in addition to your evacuation kit, if space allows.

According to a study of 1,000 animal shelters, conducted by the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, approximately 1 million dogs and 584,000 cats were taken in as strays. Unfortunately for both owners and animals, only 16% of the dogs and 2% of the cats were returned to their owners. In the chaos of emergency situations, the recovery numbers are likely to go even lower. Almost all animals can be microchipped or tattooed and this will make the odds of an owner seeing the pet again much, much higher. In addition to these permanent markings, dogs and cats should wear a collar with easy to read tags on them. A local number as well as a number for a national registry or a friend/relative at least 100 miles away should be on the tag. If local homes and phone lines are destroyed, that out of town number may be your pet's lifeline.

Develop a plan

An important first step in preparedness is the development of an emergency plan:

First, start by imagining the types of disasters that you might encounter. You may even wish to describe them in writing in your disaster plan.

Develop a general family disaster plan. Add specific plans for your pet.

The American Red Cross provides excellent courses for disaster plan development and has brochures that will help you and your children in developing and exercising your plan.

Practice evacuation

Practice evacuation of your family and pets until you can evacuate within a few minutes. Everybody in the family should participate, including your pets.

Decide on a place where your family will meet if you get separated. Decide who will take care of your pet and where he or she will stay during a crisis.

Make arrangements for pet care with neighbors, family and/or friends in case you are not able to return to an area during an emergency. Make sure they have keys to your house and leave information on where you will be, how you can be reached, where the animals are located, and how to care for your pets.

Think of whom you would phone outside of your area with regard to your family and pets. Often people cannot phone into a disaster zone, but it is possible to phone out. An out-of-state contact can help relay information and keep your family connected.

Keep a supply of change on hand to use for pay phones, as they will most likely be the first public communication to resume.

Who should you include in your plans?

The best emergency plans involve many people and systems that can back each other up, including:

- Neighbors
- friends and family
- your veterinarian (& a vet outside your area)
- your local animal control or humane shelter (know their location and contact number)
- Local boarding and grooming kennels (could provide temp shelter for your pet)
- and Local hotels and motels in your area that accept pets

An effective and proven method of ensuring help in a disaster is to establish a telephone tree. Telephone trees work when one person phones two friends to see if they need help or to request help. These two people each phone another two people and so on. In short order, everyone will have been contacted.

Preparing your pets

Animals behave very differently when stressed or fearful. Cats in particular can be very difficult to catch and handle. To reduce their stress and make them easier to handle, accustom your pets to sudden actions as would be needed in a disaster.

In some disasters, you may be at work or away from home when access to the area becomes restricted. In New Orleans and other disasters like wild fires, some pets could not be caught by rescue workers and had to be abandoned. If you get separated from your dog, there are some things you can teach your dog to make his or her chances of recovery by a rescue worker much better. These can also help if your dog gets loose and lost at any time.

- Socialize your dog by taking him to many different locations so he can meet many different kinds of people. A dog that is comfortable and relaxed in many different situations will be better able to cope with the stress of an emergency.
- Teach your dog basic manners so that when you do the socialization, it is pleasant and enjoyable for everyone involved. Knowing how to respond to “come” and “stay” can also help rescue workers retrieve your pet safely.
- Teach your dog to go to a stranger if he gets loose when you are not present. Start in a fenced area and work with a friend the dog knows. This can also be practiced in training clubs and other doggie social groups like Dog Scout Troops.
- Teach your dog to accept handling by strangers (your vet will thank you for this too!) If the pet is contaminated, rescue workers may need to clean the pet off.
- Help your dog learn that a standard muzzle is not something to fear. This will help reduce your dog’s stress level if a muzzle needs to be put on for a rescue worker’s (or vet’s) safety.
- Teach your dog that being picked up and carried is safe and fun. If you have a large dog, practice a two person carry where one person lifts the front of the dog and another lifts the back end.
- All captured dogs need to be put into a crate and most vet’s offices use crates as well. Teach your dog that a crate is a safe and comfortable place to be. Even if your pet never gets lost, this training will help reduce their stress if they are injured and need to

stay at the vet's office. Dogs should remain calm in their crate and not dig, chew or try to escape.

- Take your pet swimming. If you are in an area that has any chance of flooding, or you visit areas that can flood, teaching your pet not to panic in the water can save his or her life. All dogs can swim, but not all dogs *know* they can swim. If the dog panics, it can try to swim vertically and drown.
- Lastly, teaching your dog an emergency stop cue that will stop them in their tracks might save the dog's life in many different situations.

There are some things that you, as the responsible pet parent, should know and do to keep your pet as safe as possible in the event of an emergency.

- Have a plan for the most common disasters for your area. Learn what to expect if a particular emergency strikes. Consider which of the emergencies and disasters listed above are possible in your area (or where you are traveling) and create a plan and stock supplies so you and your pets are ready.
- Have several different evacuation routes planned and mapped out. You may not be thinking clearly under stress or you may need to evacuate within minutes and having a route written down will save precious minutes.
- Know where you can go with your pets if you need to evacuate. Family, friends, hotels that accept pets and pet kennels that are out of the area are all possibilities. Human shelters will never allow pets; however, the Red Cross is now working with animal rescue groups to set up animal shelters next to some of the human shelters. Always take your pet with you if you evacuate, you can find a place for them to stay once you are safe.
- Know how to identify your pet, especially if there are many others that look similar. Look for some describable, physical characteristic your pet has that sets him apart from all others that look similar. Keep several up to date photos of your pet in your emergency evacuation kit (along with current vaccination records and tattoo or microchip numbers)
- Have a kit ready in case you need to evacuate. Kit supplies are listed below.
- Send your pet's photos, vaccination records and identifying descriptions to a friend or relative that lives at least 100 miles away. If you are unable to look for your pet, this person should try to find your pet for you and be willing to care for your pet if you cannot.
- Practice an evacuation with your pets to see how long it takes to get out. In some cases, you may only have a few minutes. Continue practice to reduce the amount of time it takes.
- Relax by having the peace of mind that comes from knowing that you have done all that you can to prepare yourself, your family and your pets.

Disaster response

To respond safely to a disaster, remain calm and assess the situation. Then do the following:

- Crate your cat or dog immediately. Otherwise, your pet may sense danger and become more difficult to catch and crate.
- If your pet has been exposed to chemicals, contact the sources of veterinary care listed in your emergency plan for information on how to handle it without harming yourself.
- Stay safe. Never attempt to rescue pets if doing so would put your life or health or that of others in danger. If you get hurt, who will care for your pets? If you require medical evacuation, it is very likely your pets will have to stay behind.
- Listen to your radio or television for instructions on what you should do and whether special arrangements have been made for people with pets. Follow these guidelines and incorporate them into your actions.

If pets must be left behind

In some situations, circumstances may force you to leave pets behind. Do this only as a last resort. If you must leave without your pets, leave them in your home.

Under no circumstances should you ever leave your pet tied up outside or let them loose to fend for themselves. Roaming pets are a public health hazard and owners remain responsible for any injuries or damage caused by them. In large disasters where loose animals become a problem, animal control shelters may treat these animals as abandoned. Many such pets end up adopted, fostered, or euthanized. Leaving your pet behind in a disaster may decrease its chances of survival.

Leave your pets with their normal food (if fed free choice) and water in bowls that cannot be easily tipped over. Do not leave unfamiliar foods and treats for your pets, which could result in intestinal problems.

Keep exotic pets in separate rooms, especially if they pose a danger to disaster personnel who are familiar with them or to other animals that might encounter them unexpectedly.

Post information and warnings for rescue workers about what type and how many animals left in your residence, tips for immediate care and handling, and who to contact about the ongoing care of those animals. This is especially important regarding poisonous or dangerous exotics.

Recovery:

When the disaster has passed, it is not uncommon to find that once-familiar surroundings have been rearranged. Pets may become disoriented. To help your pets recovery from a disaster:

- Check them for injury and exposure to chemicals and contact a veterinarian before you attempt to treat them.
- Keep them in crates until they are calm, and allow them out only in a closed room.
- Keep them inside a home, building, or shelter until emergency management personnel confirm that the environment is safe for both you and your pet.

- Give your pet small amounts of food and water several times throughout the day. Increase to normal amounts over three to four days.
- Let your pet have plenty of uninterrupted sleep.
- Encourage your pet to play with favorite, familiar toys.
- Avoid unfamiliar things that might be stressful such as bathing your pet, excessive exercise, or dietary changes.
- If you and your pet are separated, pay daily visits to local shelters, animal control facilities, veterinary offices, and kennels until your pet is found. A phone call is often not as effective as a visit. Be sure to post photos of your lost pet. If your pet has tattoos, a microchip or other permanent identification, this will increase the chances of finding it. Don't rely on collar markings or tags, because collars are often lost.
- If you find a stray animal, take it to a shelter or other facility for lost and found animals. Place a "Found" ad in the local newspaper telling where the pet was taken. Newspapers will often run such ads at no cost to you.

If your pet is lost

If your pet is lost, you are likely to experience grief and sadness. Share your experiences with friends and family. Talking about those experiences will help you deal with your emotions and offers great stress relief. Consider seeking professional counseling, as recovery is aided when guided by professionals experienced in dealing with disasters.

Shelter-in-place and evacuation lists are below (pages 7-12)

SHELTER-IN-PLACE kit for people with pets

A Shelter In Place kit should contain at least the following items. It doesn't need to be portable, however, it should all be stored together in a closet or basement (where you would go during a tornado or bad storm). You could create separate kits for the humans, dogs, cats, horses, etc. that live with you. It is recommended that you only remove an item from the kit if you need it to help you survive or if you are replacing an item that has an old expiration date with an item that has a newer expiration date. Keeping the shelter in place kit separate from the evacuation kit, you will always be ready to go at a moment's notice if conditions change.

For each human:

- _____ A few sets of clothes for each season
- _____ Blanket/pillow and if possible, an inflatable mattress or a cot
- _____ Food that does not require refrigeration or cooking- Dry cereal, power bars, pop tarts, crackers, pre-cooked canned meat with pop top lid, etc. Enough to last 5 days
- _____ Bottled water – Enough to last 5 days. Drinking alcohol or soft drinks is not recommended because it can increase thirst and dehydration. Sports drinks (like Gatorade) are a good supplement to the water in a 5:1 ratio (5 water : 1 sports drink) Drinkable water may not be available. You don't want to use your evac supplies for this just in case you need to evacuate. Figure 1 gallon of water per day for each human and 1 quart per household pet
- _____ First Aid Kit – wound cleaner, Antiseptic ointment, Band-aids, Rolls of gauze, Sterile gauze pads, tweezers, ace bandage, paint stir sticks (for splints), analgesic (pain killer), benedryl & scissors
- _____ Flashlight – change the batteries each year
- _____ Battery powered lantern – change the batteries each year
- _____ Long burning candles (tall, narrow emergency candles)
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab your medications and take them to the storm shelter area (if applicable)

For each dog:

- _____ Spare collar* and leash (never know when one might break or get lost and you don't want to spend too much time looking for the regular leash and collar)
- _____ *Collar should have your cell phone number and the number of an out of state friend or relative or the number of a national registry that has your contact info
- _____ Proper sized crate (the kind the folds up is easiest to store and can come in handy in many situations during an emergency)
- _____ Food – Changing your dog's diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy dog food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles (approx 1 quart per day). Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs. Drinkable water may not be available. You don't want to use your evac supplies for this just in case you need to evacuate.
- _____ A chew toy that won't upset the dogs stomach. Emergencies can be very stressful and giving the dog an outlet for that stress like chewing can really help
- _____ First aid kit – Same as human's except aspirin instead of analgesics, emergency muzzle, be sure benedryl has no additives
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab the dog's medications and take them to the storm shelter area (if applicable)

For cats:

- _____ Spare collar with your cell phone number and the number of an out of state friend or relative or the number of a national registry that has your contact info

- _____ Proper sized crate (the kind the folds up is most easily transported and can come in handy in many situations during an emergency) A fluffy towel or two for inside the crate can give the cat a place to hide and keep warm.
- _____ Food – Changing your cat’s diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy cat food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs. Drinkable water may not be available. You don’t want to use your evac supplies for this just in case you need to evacuate.
- _____ First aid kit – Same as human’s except no analgesics, a cat muzzle, and be sure benedryl has no additives
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab the cat’s medications and take them to the storm shelter area (if applicable)

For horses:

- _____ Food - Changing your horse’s diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply. Several bales of hay.
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in large jugs. Drinkable water may not be available. You don’t want to use your evac supplies for this just in case you need to evacuate. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs. It may also help to include packs of kool-aid to flavor water from other areas that the horse may refuse to drink.
- _____ First Aid kit – Same as human’s in larger quantities plus leg wraps, hoof pick and clippers.

For Birds:

- _____ Food – Changing your bird’s diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy bird food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles. Drinkable water may not be available. You don’t want to use your evac supplies for this just in case you need to evacuate. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs.

For Exotics:

Use the lists above to develop a list of supplies that are suitable for your exotic pet.

EVACUATION Kit for people with pets

An Evacuation kit should contain at least the following items. It should also be in an easy to carry, waterproof container that is stored in a closet or basement. You could create separate kits for the humans, dogs, cats, horses, etc. that live with you. It is recommended that you only remove an item from the kit if you need it to help you evacuate or if you are replacing an item that has an old expiration date with an item that has a newer expiration date. However, it can be good to try to care for your pets for 5 days using only the items in the kit to see if you have enough of everything or if something needs to be added. Just be sure to replace the items you used. Putting a list of the contents and needed items on top of the kit can help you do a quick check to be sure you have all the items you need before leaving home.

For each human:

- _____ Money (Cash in small bills is recommended because ATM machines and most cash registers may not be working)

- _____ Important papers (Bank account info, passport, copy of your Driver's license, copy of the deed to your home, insurance papers, important phone numbers, computer passwords, most recent computer back-up disks (especially if you own a business), any other document that would make it easier for you to travel, show proof of residency/ID, access your bank accounts, show proof of insurance (even if your insurance agent's office no longer exists), or get government aid.
- _____ Full gas can (stored in a safe place like a garage or shed- Do not store inside your home)
- _____ Change of clothes (in Winter, add some warm clothes, hat, gloves, thermal underwear, and a thick blanket. It is a good idea to keep these in your car during cold weather)
- _____ Food that does not require refrigeration or cooking- Dry cereal, power bars, pop tarts, crackers, pre-cooked canned meat with pop top lid, etc. Enough to last 5 days
- _____ Bottled water – Enough to last 5 days. Drinking alcohol or soft drinks is not recommended because it can increase thirst and dehydration. Sports drinks (like Gatorade) are a good supplement to the water in a 5:1 ratio (5 water : 1 sports drink)
- _____ First Aid Kit – wound cleaner, Antiseptic ointment, Band-aids, Rolls of gauze, Sterile gauze pads, tweezers, ace bandage, paint stir sticks (for splints), analgesic (pain killer), benedryl, latex gloves & scissors
- _____ Flashlight – change the batteries each year
- _____ Wire, pliers, and duct tape
- _____ Clean up supplies- Paper towels, garbage bags, ziplocks
- _____ List of phone numbers:
 - Your veterinarian
 - List of secondary veterinarians
 - "Pet-friendly" motels/hotels
 - Boarding facilities (Red Cross shelters do not allow animals)
 - Emergency clinic(s)
 - Database centers if your dog is tattooed or has a microchip
 - Animal poison control center(s)
 - Animal shelters in your area (in case you get separated from your pet)
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab your medications (if applicable) Be sure to have chemical ice packs and a small cooler if meds need refrigeration

For each dog:

- _____ Spare collar* and leash (never know when one might break or get lost and you don't want to spend too much time looking for the regular leash and collar)
- _____ *Collar should have your cell phone number and the number of an out of state friend or relative or the number of a national registry that has your contact info
- _____ Proper sized crate (the kind the folds up is most easily transported and can come in handy in many situations during an emergency) stored with your evac. kit. with the following information indelibly printed: your name; phone number; address; a description of your dog (distinguishing marks, age, breed, sex, spayed, neutered, etc.); the name of your dog; microchip ID or tattoo ID, if any; pet insurance policy number; and the address and phone number where you or a contact person can be reached if you are not at home. Detailed care instructions are also recommended.
- _____ Recent photographs with the same information that is on the pet carrier printed on the back (keep in a waterproof container, e.g., inside several ziplock bags). Include yourself in some of the photos to help you reclaim your pet, should he become lost.
- _____ Dog's proof of vaccination and any on-going medical treatments or needed medication
- _____ Food – Changing your dog's diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy dog food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Spoons and can opener, if necessary

- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs.
- _____ Food and water bowls
- _____ A chew toy that won't upset the dog's stomach. Evacuation can be very stressful and giving the dog an outlet for that stress like chewing can really help
- _____ A shirt you have worn and sweated in that has your scent on it (store shirt in a plastic bag after it's completely dry) – replace every 6 months. If your dog gets loose, placing this in an open crate can encourage them to stay in the crate until you or a rescue worker can return
- _____ First aid kit – Same as human's except aspirin instead of analgesics, emergency muzzle, be sure benedryl has no additives
- _____ Clean up supplies- Paper towels, garbage bags, ziplocks
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab the dog's medications (if applicable)

For cats:

- _____ Spare collar with your cell phone number and the number of an out of state friend or relative or the number of a national registry that has your contact info
- _____ Proper sized crate (the kind the folds up is most easily transported and can come in handy in many situations during an emergency) stored with your evac kit. with the following information indelibly printed: your name; phone number; address; a description of your cat (distinguishing marks, age, breed, sex, spayed, neutered, etc.); the name of your cat; microchip ID or tattoo ID, if any; pet insurance policy number; and the address and phone number where you or a contact person can be reached if you are not at home. A fluffy towel or two for inside the crate can give the cat a place to hide and keep warm. Detailed care instructions are also recommended.
- _____ Recent photographs with the same information that is on the pet carrier printed on the back (keep in a waterproof container, e.g., inside several ziplock bags). Include yourself in some of the photos to help you reclaim your pet, should he become lost.
- _____ Cat's proof of vaccination and any on-going medical treatments or needed medication
- _____ Food – Changing your cat's diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy cat food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Spoons and can opener, if necessary
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs.
- _____ Food and water bowls
- _____ A shirt you have worn and sweated in that has your scent on it (store shirt in a plastic bag after it's completely dry) – replace every 6 months. If your cat gets loose, placing this in an open crate can encourage them to stay in the crate until you or a rescue worker can return
- _____ First aid kit – Same as human's except no analgesics, a cat muzzle, and be sure benedryl has no additives
- _____ Clean up supplies- Paper towels, garbage bags, ziplocks, dry litter
- _____ Temporary litter box & scoop
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab the cat's medications (if applicable)

For horses:

- _____ Spare halter and lead rope with ID tag. A leather or rope halter is recommended because nylon can melt in a fire and cause nasty head burns.
- _____ Horse's proof of vaccination and any on-going medical treatments or needed medication
- _____ Food - Changing your horse's diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each

time you buy food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply. Include note on the feed bucket to grab a bale or two of hay.

- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in large jugs. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs. It may also help to include packs of kool-aid to flavor water from other areas that the horse may refuse to drink.
- _____ Food and water buckets
- _____ First Aid kit – Same as human's in larger quantities plus leg wraps, hoof pick and clippers.
- _____ Blanket and hood if weather is cold- Fly sheet and fly spray if weather is warm
- _____ Reminder on the kit to grab the horse's medications (if applicable)

For Birds:

- _____ Prior to emergency, bird should have some form of permanent ID like a microchip or leg band.
- _____ Carry cage that is as small as possible while still being comfortable with the following information indelibly printed: your name; phone number; address; a description of your bird (distinguishing marks, age, breed, sex, wing clipped, etc.); the name of your bird; microchip ID or leg band ID, if any; pet insurance policy number; and the address and phone number where you or a contact person can be reached if you are not at home Detailed care instructions are also recommended.
- _____ Recent photographs with the same information that is on the pet carrier printed on the back (keep in a waterproof container, e.g., inside several ziplock bags). Include yourself in some of the photos to help you reclaim your pet, should he become lost.
- _____ Cover for the cage
- _____ Bird's proof of vaccination and any on-going medical treatments or needed medication
- _____ Food – Changing your bird's diet in a stressful situation is not recommended. Each time you buy bird food, replace the food in the kit with a new waterproof 5 day supply.
- _____ Water – enough for 5 days in bottles. Replace with fresh bottles every 6 months when time change occurs. Estimate 1-2 quarts per day for drinking, bathing, and cleaning.
- _____ Food and water bowls
- _____ Clean up supplies- Paper towels, garbage bags, ziplocks, newspaper or other cage Bedding
- _____ Spray bottle for misting
- _____ A reminder note on top of the kit to grab the bird's medications (if applicable)

Disaster Preparedness Tips for Birds

- If your birds need a regulated environment, purchase a generator to ensure you can provide it if power is disrupted. Keep sure your generator is in good running condition by starting it monthly and providing routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Make sure you have a sufficient water supply. Chlorinating stored water (add 10 drops of chlorine bleach to each gallon of water)—especially in large containers--prohibits bacterial growth. Store water away from sunlight.
- Aviaries should be equipped with an overhead sprinkler system. This will be very important to minimize smoke inhalation, cool the air, and reduce the chance of burn injuries in a fire.
- Aviculturists should have enough carriers on hand to evacuate all birds. Many birds will run into their nest boxes during a crisis. Nest boxes should be equipped with quick-release latches and a hinged cover over the entrance. This will enable you to remove the nest box and use it as a pet carrier. Flights should be constructed with easy access into and out of them.
- Birds often require specialty foods. Make sure you know what these are and where you can get them. Although surplus food can often be refrigerated, this may not be possible in a disaster, when the power supply is out.
- If vaccinations are appropriate for your bird, be sure they are up-to-date. Consult your veterinarian to learn which vaccinations are appropriate.

- Birds should be tested and free of psittacosis and tuberculosis. These are serious diseases which are transmissible to many other animals and people.
- Do not leave your birds where they can be exposed to fumes from fires or chemicals. Birds are sensitive to smoke and fumes and will succumb more quickly to smoke than most other animals.

For Exotics:

Use the lists above to develop a list of supplies that are suitable for your exotic pet.