

4 Ways to Help Pets Through Severe Weather

You've got an emergency plan for your family in case extreme weather or a natural disaster in Northern California forces you to live without power, or worse, evacuate your home. (If not, learn how to create one at [Ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan).) But, what about planning for your pets?

They're likely to be frightened and in need of some special care. Here are four tips for helping your furry friends weather an emergency:

1. **Set aside emergency pet supplies.** Include bottled water, medications, vet records (a boarding facility may require them), a carrier, a blanket, food and a food dish, and other items, depending on your pets' needs. Don't forget newspapers in case they are unable to go outside to do their business.
2. **Plan for their shelter.** If the safest place for you during a severe storm is the basement, then that's the safest place for your pets, too. Don't leave them outside or corral too many pets into a small area. Even if they typically get along, the stress of the situation may cause them to act out.
3. **Identify places to go in case of evacuation.** Think of hotels that accept pets, or of friends and family who are nearby. Make a list of their phone numbers and addresses, as well as those of a local boarding facility in case you need to stay in a shelter that doesn't allow pets. Work out a buddy system with neighbors to see that animals are evacuated in the event one of you is not home.
4. **Don't let pets roam free, even after things calm down.** Fences could be down, as well as power lines, and there could be other hazards on the ground. Pets may still be frightened enough to run off, so keep them close and keep an eye on them. Furthermore, changes in their environment and routine could cause them to act unexpectedly, such as going to the bathroom inside.

For more specialized or larger pets, talk to your veterinarian about their needs during an emergency. And be sure all pets have proper identification. Your current phone number and/or address in the Bay Area should be on their collars or tags, as well as on microchips. Because, if your pets get loose, you want to find them and bring them home again.