

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire and Life Safety Tips

September 2009

“Not without my Dog!”



Thousands of people lose their lives in fires each year with tens of thousands injured. These tragic fires also claim the lives of family pets as well.

We understand the love pet owners have for their animals. To keep them (and you) safe requires preparation **before** an emergency strikes. Fortunately there are plenty of websites and information out there for the concerned pet and livestock owner on what to do for fire and other emergencies.

Before a Fire

The best way to keep your pet safe from fire is to take the time to learn how *not* to have a fire. They do not have the same understanding and ability to react to smoke alarms as humans. Pet owners have a few added concerns to be wary of to stay safe from fire.

Maintain a 3 foot “no pet zone” around cooking and heating appliances.

Do not let your pets walk on tables and countertops. Candles being knocked off of coffee tables and shelves by pets are becoming a huge problem. Consider not using candles with pets around.

We urge you to search for potential fire hazards and “pet proof” your home to avoid tragedy.

Below is information from FEMA to help you prepare and protect your companion animals and livestock in the event of a disaster.

Information for Pet Owners

FEMA

If you evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their own. If by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

For additional information, please contact [The Humane Society of the United States](#).



Plan for Pet Disaster Needs

- Identifying shelter. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out which motels and hotels in the area you plan to evacuate to allow pets -- well in advance of needing them. There are also a number of guides that list hotels/motels that permit pets and could serve as a starting point. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers -- they might be able to provide information concerning pets during a disaster.
- Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they're not available later. While the sun is still shining, consider packing a "pet survival" kit which could be easily deployed if disaster hits.
- Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.
- [Animals in Emergencies for Owners](#) This video, developed by the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) /FEMA, is intended to help pet and livestock owners prepare to protect their animals during emergencies.

Prepare to Shelter Your Pet

- Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter, or animal control office to get advice and information.
- If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Find out where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close.
- Most boarding kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need your pet's medical records to make sure all vaccinations are current. Include copies in your "pet survival" kit along with a photo of your pet.
- **NOTE:** Some animal shelters will provide temporary foster care for owned pets in times of disaster, but this should be considered only as a last resort.
- If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take, but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in great danger! Confine your pet to a safe area inside -- NEVER leave your pet chained outside! Leave them loose inside your home with food and plenty of water. Remove the toilet tank lid, raise the seat and brace the bathroom door open so they can drink. Place a note outside in a visible area advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.

During a Disaster

- Bring your pets inside immediately.
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed your pets moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink.
- Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can stop them from running away. Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.
- Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.
- In an emergency, you may have to take your birds with you. Talk with your veterinarian or local pet store about special food dispensers that regulate the amount of food a bird is given. Make sure that the bird is caged and the cage is covered by a thin cloth or sheet to provide security and filtered light.

After a Disaster

- If after a disaster you have to leave town, take your pets with you. Pets are unlikely to survive on their own.
- In the first few days after the disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost. Also, snakes and other dangerous animals may be brought into the area with flood areas. Downed power lines are a hazard.
- The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.

Information for Livestock Owners

FEMA



If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster.



- Ensure all animals have some form of identification that will help facilitate their return.
- Evacuate animals whenever possible. Arrangements for evacuation, including routes and host sites, should be made in advance. Alternate routes should be mapped out in case the planned route is inaccessible.
- The evacuation sites should have or be able to readily obtain food, water, veterinary care, handling equipment and facilities.
- 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.

- If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to move large animals to available shelter or turn them outside. This decision should be determined based on the type of disaster and the soundness and location of the shelter (structure).

References



FEMA

Ready.gov

The Humane Society

Ask Dr. Watts – Dr. Watts/Vet Care, clevengerscorner.com, published June 29, 2009