

2015

Emergency
Preparedness and
Response Program

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PETS: A Guide for Pet Owners



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

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Your Pets Need You to Be Prepared



For many of us, our pets are like family and provide us with comfort, companionship and support. Both their health and safety are a priority. During an emergency or disaster your pets need you and are depending on you to be prepared!

Emergencies and disasters can leave you and your pets without water, shelter, and other basic needs. Pets often get left behind or separated from their owners. Others get stranded, injured, or do not survive.

Take simple steps to make sure you and your pets are ready for a range of emergencies or disasters including having the right supplies and knowing how and where to evacuate.

Your Pet's Safety Starts with You

If **you** aren't prepared for emergencies then neither are your pets. Both you and your pets need a plan that includes supplies, important contact and evacuation information. Preparing for your needs and theirs will help you and your pets to stay together, healthy and safe.

People who are not prepared to take care of their pet during an emergency put themselves and their pets at risk of injury. Keep your pets healthy, safe and ready – their lives may depend on it.

Pets and Hurricane Katrina

During Hurricane Katrina residents evacuated without their pets believing they could soon return but then were not allowed back for weeks.

In the end, over 600,000 pets were left behind and many died. Very few who survived were reunited with their owners.

Many residents who would not leave their pets risked their own lives.

Make a plan for yourself and include your pets!



QUIZ: Emergency Preparedness for Pets

Test your knowledge.

Circle one answer for each question.

1. How much food and water should I prepare for each pet?

- a. Three day supply
- b. One week supply
- c. One month supply



2. Which information is required to board a pet?

- a. An updated vaccination record (with current rabies vaccine)
- b. Microchipping
- c. Bowls, carrier, pet litter box

3. Pets can become confused or scared during and after a disaster or emergency. What can be done to keep them safe and comfortable?

- a. Leave them outside
- b. Watch their behavior
- c. Put them in their crate/carrier

4. What should you do with your pet if authorities ask you to evacuate your home?

- a. Leave your pet at home and come back for him/her later
- b. Leave a note on the door stating that you've evacuated with your family and pet
- c. Leave your pet at home with extra food and water

Check your answers:

Question 1 Answer = B. Since shelters and other animal care facilities may not have enough supplies during an emergency or disaster, it's recommended to have a one week supply of food and water for each pet. People are recommended to have a 3 day supply.

Question 2 Answer = A. Upon entry, many boarding facilities require an updated vaccination record (with current rabies vaccine). Be aware that if a vaccine record is not presented your pets may be re-vaccinated.

Question 3 Answer = C. Most animals feel calm and secure in a crate or carrier; this will also help to protect them from other hazards in the environment and to keep them from getting lost.

Question 4 Answer = B. Plan so that you never leave your pet behind. You cannot predict if and when you will be able to return for them. Find a shelter or location in advance you can bring your pet to.

Pets in Los Angeles County

LA County is home to more than 10 million people and almost half of them have pets! Here are the estimated numbers of pets in our county:



**about
2 million**



**over
2 million**



**about
300 thousand**

Goals of Emergency Preparedness: A Guide for Pet Owners

- Know the importance of emergency preparedness for your pet
- Learn the 3 key steps to emergency planning for your pet
- Complete your pet emergency plan

What will you be able to do after reviewing this guide?

- Describe the key actions to Prepare, Plan, and Recover for pets
- List two reasons why pets (e.g., dogs, cats, birds, etc.) need identification
- Describe the difference between planning an evacuation with your pet and preparing to shelter in place
- List key items that need to be included in a pet emergency kit
- Name actions you can take to comfort your pets during and after an emergency or disaster
- Complete the emergency preparedness for pet forms provided at the end of this guide

Pet Emergency Preparedness

Being prepared for a disaster also includes emergencies such as not being able to get home to your pet, heat waves and other extreme weather, or a loss of water or power.

Pet emergency preparedness has 3 steps: Prepare, Plan and Recover.

Keep your pets healthy, safe and ready – their lives may depend on it.



PREPARE	PLAN	RECOVER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification• Communication & contacts• Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know your neighborhood (risks & threats)• Evacuation• Shelter in place• People with specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional & physical support for pets• Keep your pets healthy• Find and use resources



STEP 1: PREPARE

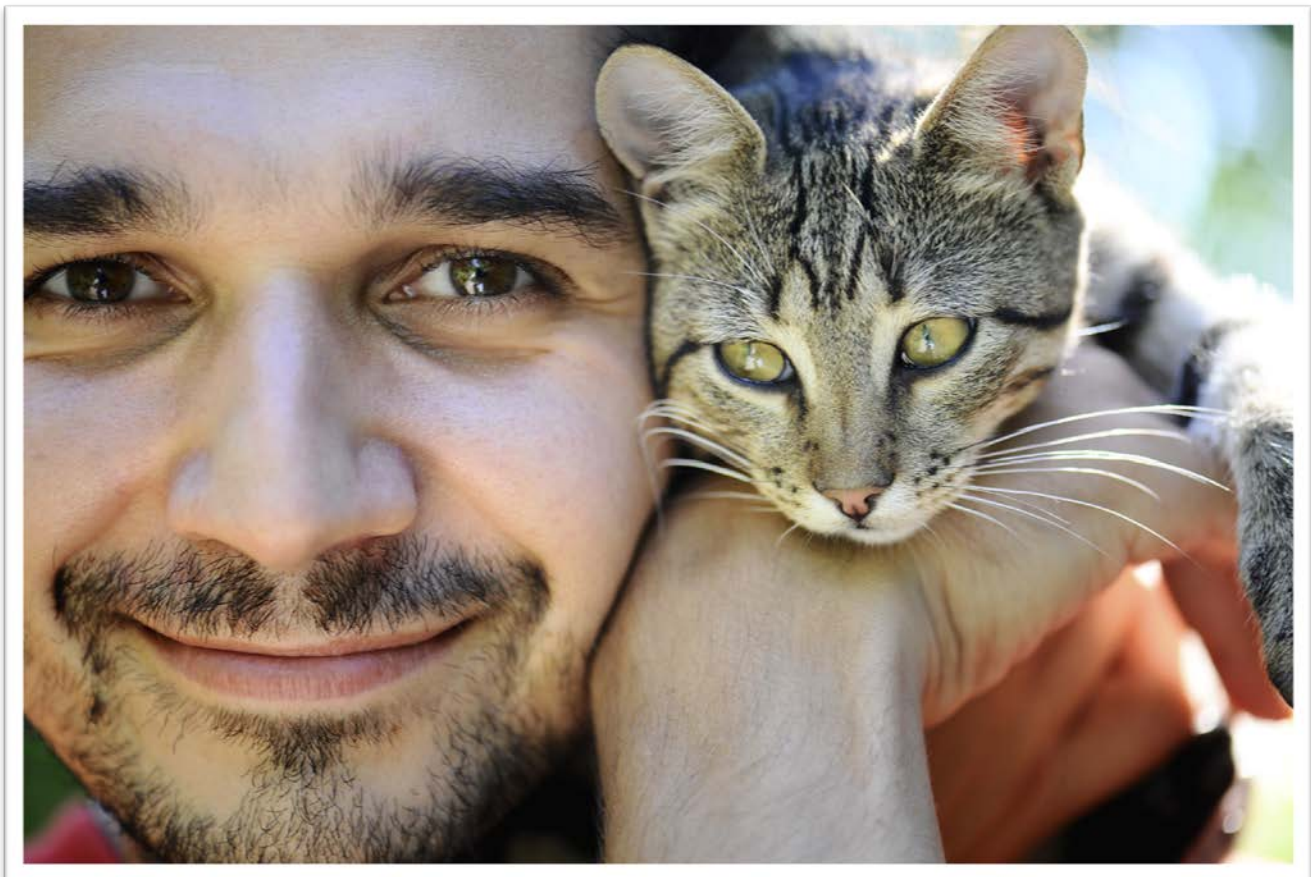
Being prepared includes:

- Pet Identification
- Communication and Contacts
- Supplies

Make sure your pet has updated identification.

Get to know people in your community. It will help you and your pet be better connected during an emergency. Having a communication plan and an up-to-date list of contacts will help you quickly get in touch with your pet's veterinarian or someone nearby that can help you care for your pet during an emergency or disaster.

Prepare enough and the right supplies, tailor them to your pets specific needs.





Identification



Pet identification is a very important part of being prepared. If your pet gets lost it can make it possible for you to be reunited.

Review the following checklist and take action. Your pet is depending on you.

Pet Identification Checklist

- Updated collars and ID tags on cats and dogs with their name and your contact information
- Microchip your pets; most veterinarians offer this service. Make sure you update your contact information with the microchip company
- Keep the following items with your important documents in a waterproof container
 - Pet registration information
 - Adoption papers
 - Vaccination documents (especially rabies)
 - Medical records
 - Feeding schedule or special health needs
 - Microchip information
 - A recent picture of you and your pet in case you get separated



Did you know?

In order to make sure pets stay with their owners, pet microchips are required in some parts of the county. The microchip is very small and slips right under their skin. Call your veterinarian to find out if this type of ID is required in your area.

Communication and Contacts



Your family, friends and neighbors might be the first people available to help you and your pet during an emergency or disaster. You will be better able to help each other by planning in advance.

Having a pet is a great way to begin talking and planning with your neighbors for an emergency. Walking your dog can help you meet neighbors and other pet owners in your area.

Having a trusted neighbor who can contact you if you're not home during an emergency could save your pet's life.

Set-up a buddy system: exchange pet information, evacuation plans and a house key with trusted neighbors, friends or family.

There are many benefits of having trusted neighbors, friends and family close by. They may be able to help during an emergency or disaster including the following:

- Check on you and your pet at the time of an emergency
- Provide transportation or care for your pet if you need to evacuate
- Check on your pets if you are not at home
 - Consider exchanging evacuation plans, house keys, and pet information in advance
 - Let them know where your pet leash, carriers and supplies are kept so that they can be found quickly



Did you know?

Several communities in Los Angeles County have dog-friendly community walking groups. To learn more, go to www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/



Supplies

Whether you need to evacuate your home or decide to stay in your current location (also called “shelter in place”), it is good to put together a pet preparedness kit with supplies for each of your pets in your home.

Make sure everyone in your home knows where supplies are kept.

The following table lists items to include in your kit. You may already have some of these items. Check off the items that you already have and begin to gather the items that are missing. Add any other items that are unique to your pet’s needs.

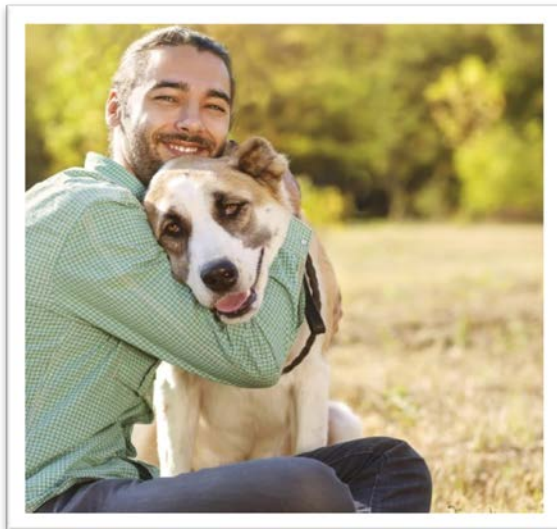


Emergency Supplies for Pets Checklist

- Food:** one week supply for each pet in an air tight water proof container or canned (top pop)
- Water:** one week supply for each pet
- Harness or strong leash** in case you need to evacuate
- Sanitation supplies:** cat litter box, litter, puppy-pads, newspaper and garbage bags, paper towels and wet wipes
- Carrier (crate) for each pet:** space large enough to allow your pet to stand comfortably, turn around and lie down
- Grooming and comfort items** to reduce stress of responding to a disaster: familiar toys, towels, blanket, pet owners clothing, treats
- Medicines and medical records:** keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes regularly in a water proof container; rotate through medicines and check expiration dates
- Documents:** pet registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents (especially rabies), medical records, feeding schedule or special health needs, microchip information, a recent picture of you and your pet in case you get separated, veterinarian’s name and contact information
- Pet first aid kit** if your pets have special health needs; if not you can share your kit with them
- Prepare a bag with your pets supplies;** it will be much easier to grab and go if you need to evacuate



STEP 2: PLAN



Making a plan includes:

- Knowing your neighborhood (threats and risks)
- Evacuation
- Shelter in place
- People with specific needs

Make a plan for what you will do in an emergency or disaster. Stay informed about the types of emergencies that are likely to happen in your area. These are

called “hazards.” For example, earthquakes, fires, extreme heat or floods.

Emergencies can be anything from a fire, an earthquake, a threat of violence, or extreme weather. Different emergencies or disasters require different responses. You, your family and pets may have to evacuate your home for one day or much longer. There may also be times when the safest action for you and others is to stay in your current location; this is called shelter in place. No matter what type of emergency, you can take action to prepare in advance.

Back-up Plans

The best emergency plans include many people and systems that can back each other up.

Include family, friends, neighbors, your veterinarian, and pet-sitters in your plans.



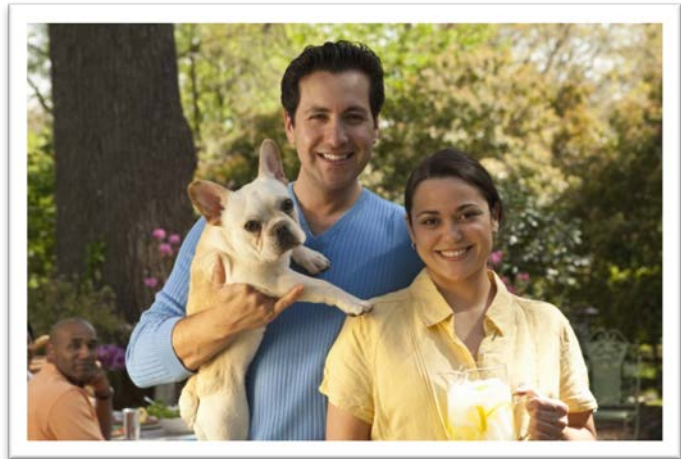


Know Your Neighborhood (Threats and Risks)

Being aware of the current risks and threats that might affect you and your pet will help you plan.

Stay informed about the types of threats or risks that are likely to happen in your area, such as earthquakes, fires, extreme heat or floods.

Emergencies can vary, their disruptions can be short or long term. You, your family, and pets will be better off if you plan for all types of emergencies or disasters.



Did you know?



There are several resources and tools that you can use to learn more about threats and risks in your area.

Go to: www.myhazards.calema.ca.gov
California Emergency Management Agency. Enter your zip code and learn about the hazards in your community. Most importantly, the site will give you tips on how to reduce your risk before an emergency or disaster happens.

Go to: www.bereadyla.org
County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health provides tips on how to create a neighborhood map.



Evacuation

Local and state authorities may ask you to evacuate your home during an emergency such as a large fire or flood. It is important to follow their instructions.

Having a plan in place will help you and your pets evacuate at a moment's notice. Plan ahead so that you never leave your pet behind. They may not survive or you may not be able to find them when you return.



Emergency shelters deal with human needs and only licensed service dogs are permitted inside. Most local and state health and safety rules do not allow animals to stay in disaster shelters. Make a plan for what you will do at the time of an emergency evacuation. There are resources at the end of this guide.

Take the following steps to plan for evacuating with your pets:

- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers
- Arrange to stay with family and friends who live outside of your immediate area or to evacuate your family and pets to a pet-friendly motel or hotel
- Arrange transportation for you and your pet in advance; connect with neighbors, family, or friends to see if they can help
- Set-up a buddy system: exchange pet information, evacuation plans and house key with trusted neighbors, friends or family
- Be ready with copies of your pets registration information, vaccine documents (especially rabies), medical records, a schedule of your pets feeding or health needs
- Leave a leash for each dog by the front door; it will save a pet-sitter valuable time (evacuation)
- List and tell others of all the hiding places for your pets
- Make sure you have quick and easy access to a pet carrier for each of your pets
- Make sure to keep a bag of the supply items that your pet will need when you leave your home
- If you evacuate, leave a sign on the window to let rescuers know that you and your pets have left the property
- Practice your evacuation drill every 6 months



Shelter in Place / Staying Where You Are

There are some emergencies and disasters when the safest action for you and your pets is to stay together in your current location, such as a gas leak, chemical spill, extreme weather, or a threat of violence. Emergency personnel will advise or require you to shelter in place if necessary; sheltering in place means taking immediate shelter wherever you are.

If you are home when you shelter in place during an emergency or disaster, find a safe area where you, your family, and pets can all stay together.



Tips for Sheltering In Place with Your Pets

- Keep your pets inside and close to you. Be ready to evacuate if things change.
- Keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers and make sure they are wearing identification.
- Find the safest place in the home; pets do better if they are in their crates away from windows or with their cages covered.
- Keep your pet inside or in a crate until you know it is safe. Be aware of hazards like debris, chemicals and other substances that could harm your pet.
- Provide your pet with familiar objects that will provide comfort (e.g., favorite blanket, toy).
- Like people, pet behavior may change. Watch for changes in mood, eating, and sleep and respond as best you can.
- Practice sheltering in place every six months. It will help your pets get familiar with being inside of a carrier, to be less stressed, and less frightened; which will make it easier to move when an emergency or disaster occurs.



Did you know?

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.



Individuals with Specific Needs



People, who have specific needs, including those with access and functional needs (AFN), may require additional help with their pets during an emergency.

Specific access and functional needs include:

- Challenges with vision
- Challenges with mobility
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Single parent with small children
- Non-English speaking
- People without transportation
- People with medical conditions
- People who live alone

How to Support Someone with an AFN

If family members, friends, neighbors and others in your community have access and functional needs, ask if they need help with their pet emergency preparedness planning.

How to Prepare If You Have an AFN

If you have specific access and functional needs, you may want to ask for help with pet emergency preparedness planning and assistance during an emergency or disaster. Consider your personal abilities or limitations that may affect your response in an emergency. These details are important to make sure that your plan fits your specific needs.

Consider asking yourself or others with AFN the following questions:

- *How can you plan for the specific needs ahead of time?*
- *How can you reach out to them?*
- *What should be considered if you need to evacuate your home?*
- *What should be considered if you shelter in place?*

There are many benefits of having trusted neighbors, friends and family close by. Consider including others in your emergency planning to see how you can work as a team.

Some ways others can help are:

- Checking on you and your pet at the time of an emergency
- Providing transportation if you need to evacuate to a shelter
- Sheltering your pet if you need to evacuate or shelter in place
- Checking on your home and pets if you not at home
- Exchanging evacuation plans, house keys, and pet information in advance including where your pet leash, carriers and supplies are kept



STEP 3: RECOVER

After an emergency or disaster you and your pet may need help to recover, this includes:

- Physical and Emotional Recovery
- Keep Pets Healthy
- Resources

If possible, prepare in advance by knowing where to find and connect to resources that you need. This will help you both to be more resilient and recover more quickly.



Having your immediate needs met will help you and your family get back on your feet and carry on with your lives as quickly as possible.

Emotional and Physical Support for Pets

After a disaster or emergency it may be hard for your pets to adjust. Animals may become confused, scared or anxious during and after an emergency or disaster. Being aware of your pet's reactions is important and will help them recover. Recovery for your pets may include: emotional issues, difficulty eating, or feeling safe.

Tips for Pet Recovery:

- Be aware that if your home or area has changed they may get disoriented and lost
- Become familiar with places they may go to or hide in
- Your pets may have behavior problems caused by stress; be patient and supportive with your pets and get them back to their normal routine as soon as possible
- Comfort your pets during and after an emergency; it takes time for them to feel safe again
- Watch your pets behavior; you can help them feel comfortable by using familiar blankets, bedding, toys or treats
- If problems with behavior continue, talk to your veterinarian
- Assess the damage to your home and outdoor space before letting your pets out of the crate or taking off their leash; if there are ongoing threats and risks in your area, keep pets in a crate for safety and comfort
- Regular pet wellness exams, vaccinations and parasite control (fleas and worms) helps protect you and your pet from getting sick with illnesses



Keep Your Pets Healthy

Healthy pets will be more prepared and better able to recover after a disaster or emergency.

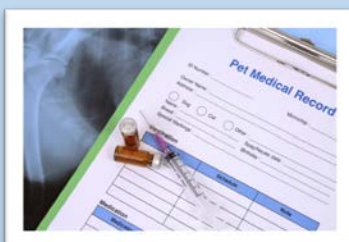
Follow these steps to help keep your pet healthy:

- Know what is normal for your pet (heart/pulse rate, gum color, body temperature and breathing rate); this will help you recognize when something is wrong
 - Know your pet's food schedule, eating, playing and body function habits
- Keep only as many pets as you can manage and evacuate during an emergency
- Know how to perform CPR and basic first aid for pets; see the resource section of this guide for more information
- Give your pet regular exercise so your pet feels better and lives longer
- Keep dogs on leashes when they are outside to avoid potentially dangerous contact with other animals
- Make sure your pet has fresh, cool water on a daily basis



Be ready for everyday emergencies, such as:

- You can't get home to your pet
- The electricity goes out
- There's a heat wave or cold stormy weather;
 - Keep your pets protected and comfortable during extreme weather (heat and cold)
 - Never leave a pet unattended in a car
 - When driving with your pet use a crate with a seat belt so that they are protected during an accident



Tips for Pet Health

- **Get to know your veterinarian and take your pet for yearly checkups.**
- **Make sure your pet is up to date on vaccines, especially rabies.**
- **Get your pet spayed or neutered.**



Resources

WEBSITES

Los Angeles County Department of Public Emergency Preparedness and Response Program
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp>
<http://www.bereadyla.org/>

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Veterinary Program
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet>

Los Angeles County Healthy Families, Healthy Pets Initiative
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HealthyPetsHealthyFamilies>

Los Angeles County's Disaster Plan
<http://lacoa.org/PDF/EmergencySurvivalGuide-LowRes.pdf>.

BROCHURES

"Disaster Preparedness for Dog and Cat Owners" brochure
<http://cdfa.ca.gov>
<http://cvma.net>

"Prepare Your Pets for Emergencies, Makes Sense." Get Ready Now brochure.
<http://Ready.gov>

Humane Society "HSUS Disaster Preparedness for Pets" brochure
<http://humanesociety.org>

MOBILE APPS

American Red Cross Pet First Aid Mobile App: Veterinary advice for everyday emergencies, with videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice.
<http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/pet-first-aid-app>

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Mobile App: Disaster preparedness and pet survival tips, a tool to store and manage your pet's vital information, practical tips and a customizable kit for recovering lost pets.
<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/aspca-launches-mobile-app-pet-parents>

EVACUATION

Pet Friendly Hotels

<http://www.pet-friendly-hotels.net/>

<http://www.pets-allowed-hotels.com/us/California/index.html>

Pet Boarding Facilities

Red Cross shelters may have the option to board your pets. Partnerships with local veterinary facilities may be available.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FORMS FOR YOUR PETS

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

VETERINARY CARE – Make a list of local, emergency and outside area care for your pets.

Veterinary Care Facilities	Name	Phone Number
Your Pets Regular Veterinarian		
24-hour Animal Hospital		
Veterinarian outside of your immediate area		

CONTACTS – Make a list of family, friends, neighbors who can help with your pets if you need assistance or aren't home when an emergency occurs.

Local Contacts	Name	Phone Number
Family member		
Friend		
Other		

EVACUATING WITH YOUR PETS

YOUR PET'S EVACUATION SITES – Find pet friendly evacuation locations ahead of time. Have at least two locations selected. Include friends, neighbors or family who could shelter your pet.

Name	Location	Phone Number

IMPORTANT CARE INFORMATION FOR YOUR PET – YOUR PET’S SPECIFIC NEEDS

Make a list of your pet’s needs below. This information will help your family members, friends or trusted neighbors keep your pet safe, healthy and happy.

Pet Feeding Schedule			
Pet’s Name	Feedings Per Day	Amounts Per Feeding	Special Instructions

Pet Medication Schedule			
Pet’s Name	Times Per Day	Amount Given	Special Instructions

Pet Treats Instructions		
Pet’s Name	Times Per Day	Commands To Be Given

Toys, Sleeping and Playing Patterns, Walking Schedule, Likes and Dislikes		
Pet’s Name	Issue	Instructions

SAMPLE PET CARE EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I, _____ owner of the below-described animal, authorize _____ (authorized agent) to make emergency veterinary medical decisions, (unless noted below), for the animal described below in the event that I cannot be reached. Where applicable, I have also listed guidelines and limitations of care. I accept financial responsibility for the emergency care of the animal(s).

Contact information in case of emergency (provide all forms of contact): _____

Other contacts (travel companions, etc. name and contact information): _____

Dates of travel or expiration date of this form: _____

Name of animal (?): _____

Type of animal: _____

Age, weight and sex of animal: _____

Description of animal (color, markings): _____

Relevant medical history: _____

Microchip number (if applicable): _____

Vaccinations (vaccination, date): _____

Medications (name, dose, frequency, route of administration):

Name	Dose	Frequency	How medication is given (orally, etc.)	Other notes

Disclaimer: This model form/document is a sample only, is not specific to the facts of any business or organization, and therefore should not be used or relied upon without the advice of retained legal counsel. This model form/document is not intended to provide legal advice or opinion and should not be constructed as such.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST: FOR YOU & FOR YOUR PET

PREPARE ◦ PLAN ◦ RECOVER	
FOR YOU	FOR YOUR PET
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communication/Contacts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key contact information for family, friends, colleagues, neighbors • Out-of-state contact • Nearest hospital • Medical group or physician 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Communication/Contacts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key contact information for family, friends, colleagues, neighbors who can help with pet if you are not home • Pet-sitter • Nearest veterinarian • Veterinarian outside of your area • 24 Hour animal hospital
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Important Documents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important documents in a waterproof container • Personal identification • Social Security Card • Passport • Medical card and health information • Insurance information • Photo of household members • Inventory of valuable household items 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Important Documents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important documents in a waterproof container • Pet identification • Pet license/registration • Microchip information • Vaccination documents (especially rabies) • Medical records • Detailed information about special health needs (medicine, feeding schedule) • Recent picture with owner • List of your pets hiding places
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Supplies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and food (3 day supply) • Medicines (if needed) • First aid kit/supplies • Special items (hearing aids, eye glasses, contacts, diapers, baby formula/food, wheelchair, canes, walkers) • Flashlight and radio • Cash and small bills • Personal hygiene items (shampoo, toothbrush/paste, toilet tissue) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Supplies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and food (one week supply) • Medicines (if needed) • First aid kit/supplies • Carrier or cage for each pet • Leash and muzzle • Bedding • Comfort items: toys, blankets, treats • Sanitation items: paper towels, newspaper, plastic trash bags, household bleach
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Evacuation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed upon sites in your neighborhood or community for you to stay • Transportation plan/agreement in case you do not drive or have a car • Local and outside of area evacuation site locations 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Evacuation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of family member, friend, neighbor that can shelter and care for your pet • List of pet friendly hotel, motel, boarding facility

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