



companions, unintentionally causing the death of that beloved pet. Other pets survive abandonment, but are never reunited with owners frantically searching for them. Owners learn too late that they cannot bring pets into a crowded rescue helicopter or boat. Saddest of all are the owners who refuse to leave their animals behind and stay with them rather than to evacuate choosing to possibly sacrifice their own lives.

Start today! You are in the best position to know you and your family's needs before, during, and after a disaster. Be sure **your plans fit your unique circumstances.** You can take small steps everyday to get better prepared. In addition, to the pet and service animal information in this brochure, visit www.nod.org/emergency for ideas on how to get yourself better prepared.

Where to find more information

Many of these agencies provide materials in large font, audio or video cassettes formats, and different languages.

American Council of the Blind

www.acb.org • (202)467-5081 (voice) • (800)424-8666

American Foundation for the Blind

www.afb.org • (212)502-7600 (voice)

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Easter Seals (s.a.f.e.t.y. First program)

www.easter-seals.org • (800)221-6827 (voice) (312)726-4258 (TTY)

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov/preparedness/> • (800)480-2520 (voice)

Humane Society of the U.S. (Disaster Center)

www.hsus.org • (202)452-1100 (voice)

National Organization on Disability

www.nod.org/emergency
(202)293-5960 (voice) • (202)293-5968 (TTY)

Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.

www.tdi-online.org • (301)589-3786 (voice) (301)589-3006 (TTY)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov • (800)BE READY (voice) • (800)464-6161 (TTY)

United Spinal Association

www.unitedspinal.org • (718)803-3782 (voice)



910 16th Street, N.W. Ste. 600
Washington, D.C. 20006

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON
DISABILITY



EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
INITIATIVE

Prepare Yourself

*Disaster Readiness Tips
for*

OWNERS OF PETS OR SERVICE ANIMALS

www.nod.org/emergency
910 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 293-5960 (VOICE)
(202) 293-5968 (TTY)
(202) 293-7999 (FAX)

Funded by Department of Education Grant #H235J040002
and Department of Justice Grant #2004-TH-0003



To be better prepared as a nation, we all must do our part to plan for disasters. Individuals, with or without disabilities, can decrease the impact of a disaster by taking steps to prepare **BEFORE** an event occurs. Results from focus groups conducted by the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI), indicate that people with disabilities need to be more self reliant in emergencies.

Americans love pets. We care for about 350 million animals, including 65 million dogs and 77 million cats. In addition, thousands of persons with disabilities rely on service animals for assistance with daily activities.

When disaster strikes, our national love affair with pets can lead to tragedy. Some ill-prepared owners evacuate without their animal

Service Animals Are Not Pets

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.” They are not pets. Their jobs include: guiding people who are blind; alerting people who are deaf or hearing impaired to doorbells, fire alarms or a baby’s cry; pulling wheelchairs for people with mobility impairments; protecting a person who has seizures; and performing a therapeutic function for persons with mental illness or autism. The overwhelming majority of service animals are dogs, but a few horses have been trained to guide people who are blind, and a small number of monkeys assist people with quadriplegia.

Although service animals should wear identifiable collars, the ADA requires neither identification, licenses, nor training. Unlike pets, service animals and their owners may enter a wide range of public accommodations, such as stores, restaurants, museums, and transportation systems.

A service animal can be excluded from such places only if its behavior is a direct threat to the life or safety of people, or if it becomes a nuisance, e.g., through incessant barking. The animal’s owner is responsible for its behavior

and for supplying any food, water, or medication it may need, even during a disaster.

In times of disaster, a service animal is permitted in a shelter, clinic, or any other facility related to the emergency, such as a Federal Recovery Center.

Fire!

Home fires remain the most common and most deadly emergency in America. Each year, people die when they return to a burning house to rescue pets. Don’t do this: let firefighters make the rescue — it’s part of their job.

Follow these tips:

- Purchase stickers for doors and windows indicating number, type, and probable location of animals. Change stickers as your pet population changes.
- If possible, confine animals to a particular room each time you leave home, no matter how briefly. You will know where they are and may be able to direct firefighters if a fire starts in your absence.
- If you can’t keep them in one place, remember where they usually go to sleep or hide. That’s where they are likely to be in case of fire, unless prevented by smoke or heat.

Consider including the following items:

- Two-week supply of water in plastic gallon jugs
- Cage/carrier (for each animal, labeled with contact information)
- Veterinary records and proof of ownership
- Favorite toys, treats, blankets
- First aid kit and manual (call your vet)
- Leash, collar, harness (for each animal)
- Litter, litter pan, litter scoop
- Manual Can opener and spoons
- Muzzles (dog or cat)
- Newspaper (for bedding or litter)
- Nonspill food and water dishes
- Paper towels and plastic baggies
- Stakes and tiedown



- Time permitting, remove animals from a burning house on a leash or in a carrier. Make sure your animals wear nonbreakable collars with current license and vaccination tags.
- Place muzzles, handling gloves, catch nets, and animal restraints where firefighters can easily find them.
- Keep animal health and ownership records (including a photo of you with your animal) in your “go-kit,” so you can quickly grab them upon exiting. Put a copy of the records in a safe location away from your home.

A True Member of the Family?

Many people say a spiritual bond unites them to their pets. If your animals are true members of the family, they must be included in your family’s emergency plan.

Create an Emergency Plan

Include pets or service animals in your emergency plan now. Don’t wait until real disaster narrows or eliminates choices.

Follow these tips:

- Develop an animal support network of at least two neighbors with whom you can leave keys and instructions on how to feed and evacuate animals in your absence.
- Consider further identification of your animals with a microchip, tattoo, or neck band.
- Provide collar, leash, and carrier for each animal as transport and housing. Carriers should be large enough so that the animal is reasonably comfortable. Make each animal familiar with its carrier and associate it with treats.
- Select evacuation sites in advance. If you board your animals, assure yourself that the kennel or veterinary clinic is out of the path of the particular hazard. If you will be staying with friends or relatives, make sure they know you are bringing animals.
- If you have no car, arrange evacuation assistance for family and pets with at least two different persons.
- If you absolutely cannot bring pets with you, leave them inside with an adequate supply of food and water for several days. Do not tie them up outside.

Sheltering

During large emergencies shelters are made available to the public. These shelters, usually operated by groups like the local American Red Cross chapter, can save your life, but are a last resort for those who have no other alternative. These shelters are **open to service animals**, but, unless indicated, these shelters are **closed to pets**.

Pet-Friendly Shelters?

Pet-friendly shelters generally are of two types: a facility especially designated for animals at some distance from the shelter for people; or a single building for people and pets, animals not being allowed in public areas. **However, “Pet-friendly” shelters are very rare.** To find out if any are available in your community, contact your local emergency management agency. If none are planned, you might suggest the idea and offer your services as a volunteer to find a solution.

Be Ready: Create an Animal Ready Kit and a Go Bag

Create a comprehensive “ready kit” with supplies necessary to sustain your pet or service animal for a week or more. Don’t forget to stock a “go bag” containing the most essential items you’ll need if you must leave immediately. Also, be sure to pack a ready kit and go bag for you and your family as well (visit www.nod.org/emergency).