

Pet Owners Urged to Prepare for Hanna

As the tropical storm heads toward the East Coast, pet owners need to make plans.

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Animal welfare organizations remind pet owners to include their pets in their disaster plans as Tropical Storms Hanna, Ike and Josephine approach the Atlantic coast. Tropical Storm Hanna hit the southeast Atlantic coast in Melbourne, Fla., on Friday and was expected to move north through the East Coast states over the weekend. Tropical Storms Ike and Josephine are following on Hanna's heels. As residents prepare for the storms, animal welfare organizations remind pet owners to include their cats, dogs and other animals in their disaster plans.

"I urge residents along the Southeast Coast to prepare now for the possibility of evacuation orders by preparing a pet disaster kit and making plans to evacuate with your animals," said Laura Bevan, director of the Southeast Regional Office of the Humane Society of the United States. "If it's not safe for you, it's not safe for your animals."

Residents in the coastal states can check their local websites for updated evacuation information. Some of these sites include: The Florida State Agricultural Response team The Georgia Emergency Management Agency The North Carolina State Animal Response Team The South Carolina Emergency Management Division

Pet owners can plan ahead by putting together a pet disaster kit. Such a kit should include: A three-day supply of food and drinking water, and the appropriate bowls Cat litter and container to use as a litterbox Current photos and descriptions of pets Up-to-date identification, including an additional tag with the contact information for someone out of the area Medications and medical records, as well as a first-aid kit. Store these in a waterproof container Leashes, harnesses and pet carriers to transport pets safely. Include blankets or towels for bedding and warmth