

Survey Shows Owners Won't Leave Without Pets

A survey by American Humane reveals that 47 percent of Americans won't evacuate without their pets.

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When faced with the decision to evacuate with or without their pets, 47 percent of Americans said they would refuse rescue assistance if it meant leaving without their animals. This statistic, revealed in a 2007 survey conducted by the American Humane Association, highlights the importance of pet evacuation plans, both by pet owners and local governments. Such formal evacuation plans were effectively deployed before Hurricane Gustav.

"During Hurricane Katrina, American Humane and others rescued nearly 10,000 animals," said Marie Belew Wheatley, American Humane president and CEO. "As Gustav set its sights on Louisiana, we were part of efforts that temporarily and safely housed more than 1,000 animals for evacuating residents who needed a place to shelter their pets. Now, with hurricane season in full swing, it's important that the lessons and successes applied in Louisiana are applied elsewhere."

AHA's national study surveyed 1,000 adults to gauge their attitudes and preparedness levels as it applies to natural disasters. The study found that 72 percent of respondents believe formal evacuation plans for pets should be put into place, with owners in the South and West most strongly supporting such disaster plans. Other findings included: Dog owners would refuse evacuation efforts first, with 55 percent of dog owners saying they would refuse, compared to 43 percent of cat owners.

People with children were 62 percent more likely to leave their pets and evacuate than those without children.

Forty-five percent of respondents said animals should be rescued only after all humans had been brought to safety; 34 percent said animals could be rescued along with humans "if time and space permits."