

Pets and Disaster Preparedness

Travel expert gives advice on being ready to evacuate with animals.

Devastating images of pets left behind last year in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and some of their owners who wouldn't leave without their beloved pets remind us how important disaster preparedness is.

Whether its a hurricane, tornado, wildfire, earthquake, mudslide or other natural disaster, when you need to get out, you need to get out fast.

Travel authority Gayle Martz, president and owner of Sherpas Pet Trading Company in New York has traveled over a million miles on the road and in the car with her pets in carriers. Martz, who's also on the Travel Goods Association Advisory Board, offers her preparedness tips:

A pet should have a collar and a tag with up-to-date information. It seems obvious, but many of the pets found after Hurricane Katrina had none. A recent telephone number, cell phone number and any medical needs should be included on the tag. On light-colored dogs, a telephone number in permanent marker can be written as a last resort. A microchip is ideal.

Keep emergency supplies and a pet travel kit on hand and close to the door so they're ready at a moments notice. The travel kit should be stocked with first aid supplies, two to three weeks worth of food and water, bowls for both, leash, collar, recent picture of your pet (for proof of ownership), litter trays, baggies, toys, photocopies of medical records, flashlight and blanket.

Identify pet friendly hotels in safe areas, kennels or veterinary hospitals that can house your pet in an emergency. Talk to friends and family in other areas that would be willing to care for your pet.

Know where your local shelters are in case your pet is lost.

If possible, plan for having someone take your pet before the threat of a disaster. Sadly, one of the reasons many pets were left behind in Katrina is because they didn't fit in the family vehicle there was no room after the family and their belongings.

For additional information, visit [The Humane Society of the United States](#), [The Emergency Animal Rescue](#) or [The American Veterinary Medical Association](#).

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