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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR YOUR PET

Dr. Kathryn Junkins Sarpong

The news reminds us that disaster can strike at any point and result in the need to quickly evacuate your family from your home. Your family includes the furry and feathered members. The floods in New Orleans taught many lessons including the need to include pets in disaster plans. You can do some simple things to help prevent your pet being an unnecessary victim of an unexpected disaster.

1. Microchip your pets. If your pets are microchipped- make certain the information is current in the database. Have your veterinarian scan your pets on the next visit to make certain the chip is still working normally. Usually a chip lasts a lifetime, but occasionally one migrates or stops working.
2. Use a collar and ID tag. This is simple and can help keep your pet with you in a chaotic situation. Keep a recent digital photo of your pets.
3. Have a travel crate and leashes for each dog, cat, or other small pet. Imagine a flood and needing to evacuate by boat – your house cat will not want to sit in your lap! A carrier is a must for safety of the pet and can serve as a temporary home in an emergency.
4. Keep a waterproof bag with leash, 3 days of food and water, blanket, essential medicines, and recent vaccine records.
5. Have a meetup plan /location for all family members. Agree on a 3rd party contact in another city you will each tell where you are located if separated. Memorize their phone number. Cell phone batteries die and phones get damaged. Advanced conversations can prevent confusion later.
6. Evacuate early with your pets, rather than waiting for the last minute.

These few steps can be done now in calm times to help you later if you ever need them. 