

Pet and Livestock Preparedness

This guide was previously posted on the Routt County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) webpage as a quick guide for residents to begin thinking about how to prepare their pets for emergencies. We encourage you to read over these tips and apply the ones that make the most sense for your pets or livestock. Contact your local veterinarian or the CSU Extension Office for more information and assistance.

Preparation

Countless times people have been told to leave their homes for a "short time," only to find that they cannot return for days or weeks. Even disasters like gas leaks and minor flooding can keep you from tending to your animals for extended periods of time. To prevent situations such as these, take your animals with you. It is best to be overly cautious during a disaster warning. Preparing ahead of time and acting quickly is the best way to keep you and your family, including your animals, out of danger.

- Set up an appointment to talk to your veterinarian about planning for your animals during disasters.
- Assemble an animal evacuation kit, this should be discussed between you and your veterinarian.
- Familiarize yourself with each type of disaster that your area could be affected by, including a hazardous materials spill.
- Develop an evacuation plan for all of your animals.
- Keep written directions to your home near your telephone. This will help you tell emergency responders how to get to your home if you are in a state of panic and in need of rescue, or if a person unfamiliar with your area is the only person in your home during a disaster.
- Identify alternate sources of food and water. Some local food and water sources may be disrupted or contaminated for extended periods of time following a disaster.
- Have backup generators for use in food / animal production operations.
- Keep all vehicles well maintained and full of gas.
- Keep emergency cash on hand.

If You Are Not Home

Place stickers on front and back house doors, barn doors, and pasture entrances to notify neighbors, fire fighters, police, and other rescue personnel that animals are on your property and where to find your evacuation supplies. Provide a list near your evacuation supplies of the number, type, and location of your animals, noting favorite biding spots, in order to save precious rescue time.

To facilitate a successful rescue, you should provide muzzles, handling gloves, catch nets, and animal restraints where rescue personnel can find them. Keep in mind that animals may become fractious when frightened. Designate a willing neighbor to tend to your animals in the event that a disaster occurs when you are not at home. This person should have a key to your home, be familiar with your animals, know your evacuation procedures, and know where your evacuation supplies are kept. It is suggested that you sign a letter that releases your neighbor from responsibility should one of your animals become injured and sign a veterinary medical treatment authorization form.

Identification

Having identification on your animals, including rabies and license tags, if applicable, will help reunite you with your animal(s) in the event that you are separated. Identification should provide your name, home address, a phone number where you can be reached, and an out-of-state phone number of someone that you will be in contact with during or soon after the disaster / evacuation. If possible, include your veterinarian's name, location, and phone number.

Small Animal Identification

- Collar tag, a piece of tape applied to the back of the collar tag can provide evacuation site information.
- Microchip
- Tattoo
- Temporary neckband

Equine / Livestock Identification

- Microchip
- Tattoo
- Ear tag
- Halter tag
- Neck chain
- Ear notches
- Leg band
- Brand
- Mane clip
- Luggage tag braided into tail or mane
- Clipper-shaved information in the animals' hair
- Livestock marking crayon, non-toxic, non-water soluble spray paint, or magic markers to write on the animals' side
- Permanent marker to mark hooves

It is important to separate animals from different households as much as possible and to maintain the best possible hygiene to decrease disease transmission.

Small Animal

Have a leash, collar, and/or harness for each pet. Have a collapsible cage or airline approved carrier for each pet, including proper bedding for transportation or housing purposes. Familiarize your animals with evacuation procedures and cages or carriers. Take the cage or carrier out several times a year and put dog or cat treats inside with blankets and toys. By doing this, you will reinforce positive feelings associated with the animal carrier. For housing purposes, cat carriers should be large enough to hold a small litter pan and two small dishes and still allow your cat enough room to lie down comfortably or stand to use the litter pan.

Dog kennels or collapsible cages should be large enough to hold two non-spill bowls and still allow enough room for your dog to stand and turn around. For added assurance, clearly label each carrier with your identification and contact information. Owning enough carriers to accommodate your pets facilitates a speedy evacuation and may mean the difference between the life and death of your pet. Locate and prearrange an evacuation site for your family and animals outside your immediate area. Ideally, this will be a friend or relative or a pet-friendly hotel that is willing to let your family and animals stay in the event of a disaster. However, other possible animal housing options include veterinary hospitals, boarding kennels, and animal shelters.

Equine / Livestock

Equine and livestock evacuation can be challenging. Develop an evacuation plan and make sure that equine/livestock are familiar with being led into a trailer. Having a plan in place and practicing the plan prior to a disaster will help you accomplish a successful evacuation and maintain the safety of your animals. Locate and prearrange an evacuation site for your animals outside your immediate area. Possible sites include veterinary or land grant colleges, racetracks, show grounds, pastures, stables, fairgrounds, equestrian centers, livestock corrals, stockyards or other boarding facilities.

If you do not have enough trailers to transport all of your animals to an evacuation site quickly, contact neighbors, local haulers, farmers, producers or other transportation providers to establish a network of available and reliable resources that will provide transportation in the event of a disaster. Make photocopies of important veterinary documents to store in the evacuation kit.

- Vaccination records
- Vaccination type and date
- Rabies certificate, if applicable
- Medical history
- Important test results (Felv/FP, Heartworm, Coggins, TB, other infectious diseases)
- Medical conditions

Proof of Ownership

Make copies of registration information, adoption papers, proof of purchase, and microchip information to store in the evacuation kit. List each one of your animals and their species / breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.

Keep current photographs of your animals in the evacuation kit for identification purposes. Include yourself in some of the photos to help you reclaim your lost animal(s). Consider preparing laminated "Lost Pet" signs with your animal's photo attached, your name and your contact information to use in case your animal is lost.