



Children In Case of Emergency



Children & Disasters

Disasters may strike quickly and without warning. These events can be frightening for adults, but they are traumatic for children if they don't know what to do. During a disaster, your family may have to leave your home and daily routine. Children may become anxious, confused, or frightened. It is important to give children guidance that will help them reduce their fears.



Children and Their Response to Disaster

Children depend on daily routines. When emergencies or disasters interrupt this routine, children may become anxious. In a disaster, they'll look to you and other adults for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act. If you react with alarm, a child may become more scared. They see our fear as proof that the danger is real. Unlike adults, however, children have little experience to help them place their current situation into perspective. Each child responds differently to disasters, depending on his or her understanding and maturity, but it's easy to see how an event like this can create a great deal of anxiety in children of all ages because they will interpret the disaster as a personal danger to themselves and those they care about.

Quick Tips for Parents

- Be honest and open about the disaster.
- Children need comforting and frequent reassurance that they're safe.
- Encourage children to express their feelings through talking, drawing or playing.
- Maintain daily routines as much as possible.

Preparing Children for A Disaster

Create a Family Disaster Plan and practice it so that everyone will remember what to do when a disaster does occur. Everyone in the household, including children, should play a part in the family's response and recovery efforts. Make sure your child knows what smoke detectors, fire alarms and local community warning systems (horns, sirens) sound like. Teach your child how and when to call for help. Post local emergency phone numbers by all telephones. Even very young children can be taught how and when to call for emergency assistance. Help your child memorize important family information, such as their family name, address and phone number. They should also know where to meet in case of an emergency. Younger children could carry a small index card that lists emergency information.

After the Disaster: Time for Recovery

Immediately after the disaster, try to reduce your child's fear and anxiety. Keep the family together. Calmly and firmly explain the situation. As best as you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. Encourage children to talk. Let children talk about the disaster and ask questions. Encourage children to describe what they're feeling. Include children in recovery activities. Give children chores that are their responsibility. This will help children feel they are part of the recovery. You can help children cope by understanding what causes their anxieties and fears. Reassure them with firmness and love. Your children will realize that life will eventually return to normal.

Pre-School Age Children

Behavior such as bed-wetting, thumb sucking, baby talk, or a fear of sleeping alone may intensify in some younger children. They may complain of very real stomach cramps or headaches, and be reluctant to go to school. It's important to remember that these children are not "being bad" -- they're afraid. Reassure young children that they're safe. Get a better understanding of a child's feelings about the disaster.

Grade-School Age Children

Children this age may ask many questions about the disaster, and it's important that you try to answer them in clear and simple language. False reassurance does not help this age group. Be sure to monitor children's media viewing. Allow children in this age range to express themselves through play or drawing. And finally don't be afraid to say "I don't know."

Adolescents

Adolescents may try to down-play their worries. It is generally a good idea to keep the lines of communication open and remain honest about the financial, physical and emotional impact of the disaster on your family. When adolescents are frightened, they may express their fear through acting out or regressing to younger habits. Monitor their media exposure to the event and information they receive on the Internet. Adolescents may turn to their friends for support. Encourage friends and families to get together and discuss the event to allay fears.



For more information call the National Mental Health Association 1-800-969-NMHA (6642). Additional information can be found at www.fema.gov/kids.

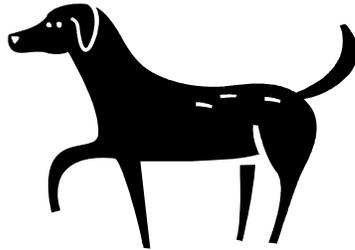


Pets In Case of Emergency



Tips for Pet Owners Before a Disaster

- Keep your pet's ID tag up-to-date and make sure it is securely fastened to your pet's collar.
- Make sure nothing is positioned so that it can fall on your pet.
- Arrange for a neighbor to take care of your pet if you are not able to get home after a disaster.
- Find out before a disaster which local hotels and motels allow pets and where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to include some outside your local area in case local facilities have closed. Remember that most boarding facilities require veterinarian records to provide vaccination records are current.
- Be aware that pets will not be allowed at locations for the sheltering of displaced people, so you will need to have a place to house your pet while you are at the shelter.
- Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians, and "pet-friendly" hotels that could shelter your pets in an emergency.
- Prepare a shelter or evacuation kit for your pet, including an unbreakable dish, veterinarian records, a restraint (leash or pet carrier) and medication with instructions.



During and After an Event

- Do not try to hold onto your pet during an earthquake or other disaster. Animals will instinctively protect themselves and hide where they are safe. If you get in their way, even the nicest pets can turn on you.
- Be patient with your pets after a disaster. They get stressed just like people and need time to readjust. They may disappear for some time, but they generally show up again when things have calmed down.
- If you have outdoor pets, keep them indoors until any subsequent events have subsided and they have calmed down.
- If you must evacuate your home, do not leave pets behind, however, pets will not be allowed at locations for the sheltering of displaced people. Take them to a local boarding facility and visit often if possible.

Disaster Supply Checklist for Pets

Keep everything accessible, stored in sturdy containers (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.).

In your disaster kit, you should include:

- Medications and medical records stored in a water-proof container and a first aid kit. A pet first aid book is also good to include.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers to transport pets safely and to ensure that your pets can't escape. Carriers should be large enough for the animal to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down. Your pet may have to stay in the carrier for hours at a time while you have taken shelter. Be sure to have a secure cage with no loose objects (except blankets or towels for bedding and warmth) inside it to accommodate smaller pets.
- Current photos and descriptions of your pets to help others identify them in case you and your pets become separated and to prove that they are yours.
- Food and water for at least three days for each pet, bowls, cat litter and litter box, and a manual can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets or place them in foster care.
- Other useful items include newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items, toys to help reduce stress and household bleach.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

ANIMALS INSIDE!

Check type of pets in the home:

Cats _____
number of cats

Dogs _____
number of dogs

Other (please specify): _____

Please call: _____

Tape this card on the inside of a front facing window

FOSTER CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1040 E. Hillsdale Blvd. • Foster City, CA 94404

650.286.3350 • fire@fostercity.org