

EVACUATION ESSENTIALS

A The start to 2011 has been full of extreme weather with floods, cyclones and fire. The thought of evacuating and leaving your home is full of stress and uncertainty and people have to make some quick decisions on what to take and where to go. Gathering the family, packing essentials and making arrangements all takes time.

But what about our pets?

Many people simply don't have an evacuation plan or basic items to evacuate pets to a safe place during a natural disaster or emergency. Taking time to plan ahead and set aside an essential pet evacuation kit is key to making this a less stressful and more organised affair.

A kit can be easily put together and set aside in a safe place that all family members can access. Choose a safe place like in a self in the kitchen or perhaps a wardrobe. Find a bag that will be easy to carry and hold all the essentials—an old school backpack that's no longer used is a good option. If you have a small pet carrier for your cat or small dog then use this to store your essentials.

THE ESSENTIALS

The first essential item your pet is going to need is water and food. Even a small bottle of water will tide your pet over until a clean source is found. Food is also an important consideration. Choose a dry food from your supermarket that has a long self-life. You may not normally feed this to your cat or dog but the more commercially found foods last longer in storage than some other brands. Grab a small can of food as well and don't forget treats. Again, the more commercially found varieties have a longer shelf-life.



PACK A TOWEL

Find an old towel and pack this into the kit. A towel can double as something for your pet to sleep on as well as doing what it was made for—drying.



FIRST AID

Your local chemist will have ready-made first aid kits that contain saline solution, tweezers, small scissors, tape and bandages. Also buy some anti-bacterial wash and a small tube of sunblock. Find sunblock that's made for small children as this will be gentler on delicate noses and other body parts.

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IDENTIFICATION

Pack a photocopy of your pet's microchip information. Having this information can be a time saver should you be separated. Get an id tag made that has your mobile number as well as a relative that resides in another part of the state or interstate. That way you will always have a back-up contact number should your mobile be lost or lose reception. Put the id tag securely on a spare collar as this will ensure you can easily slip the emergency collar on, saving time and hassle.

We hope you never have to use these evacuation essentials but at least having them in the house will bring a little peace of mind.



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