

## **PETS AND HURRICANES**

### ● **WHY PET OWNERS MUST PLAN**

- \*Public shelters for people will not accept pets.
- \*If you wait until the last minute to evacuate, you may have no choice but to go to a public shelter.
- \*If such a situation should force you to leave pets behind, please prepare your children and other family members for the fact that their pets may not survive or may be irretrievably lost before you are able or permitted to return to your home.
- \*There is no way to know how long it will be before you are permitted back after the storm.
- \*Frightened animals quickly slip out open doors, broken windows, or other damaged areas of your home opened by the storm.
- \*Lost pets are likely to die from exposure, starvation, predators, and contaminated food and water, or on the road where they can endanger others.
- \*Even normally friendly animals of different species should not be allowed together unattended since the stress of the storm may cause distinct behavior changes.
- \*REMEMBER: If you must evacuate....then conditions are not only unsafe for you, but unsafe for other living creatures as well!!!

### ● **DEVELOP YOUR WRITTEN PLAN NOW**

- \*A written DISASTER PLAN will help you and your pets survive.
- \*Identify your evacuation zone and level to determine if and when you would have to leave.
- \*If you are located in a storm surge flood plain, the decision to evacuate will depend on the category of the storm. Always prepare for one category higher than the one being forecast. A hurricane often increases in strength just before making landfall.
- \*Your goal should be to evacuate to a safe location.
- \*Friends or relatives in a safe area are your best choice.
- \*If they are unable to house both you and your pets, arrange shelter for your pets at a veterinarian or kennel close to your evacuation location, so that you will be able to have as much contact with them as possible. You and your pets will fare better if you are together.
- \*If you plan to go to a motel, determine in advance whether pets are welcome and what, if any, special rules are applicable.
- \*Make plans well in advance of the hurricane season for cows, horses, sheep, etc.
- \*Additional preparedness guidelines may be obtained from your local Animal Control Division, Cooperative Extension Office, or Emergency Management.

### ● **IF YOU MUST EVACUATE**

#### **Leave Early**

- \*An unnecessary trip is far better than waiting too long to leave safely!!
- \*All animals should have secure carriers or collapsible cages for large dogs, as well as collars, leashes, rabies tags and owner ID tags.
- \*Carriers should be large enough for the animals to stand comfortably and turn around. ID must be on the carrier.
- \*Train your pets to become familiar with their carriers ahead of time. Then the carrier will be a secure and comforting refuge if the animal is required to live in it for days - even weeks- after the storm.

- \*Before hurricane season begins on June 1 of each year, make sure all your pets have current immunizations and take these records with you if you must evacuate. Photograph each of your pets prior to June 1 every year and include these pictures with your pet's immunization records.
- \*Your pet survival kit should include ample food (at least 2 weeks supply); water/food bowl, medications, specific care instructions, newspapers and plastic trash bags for handling waste, cat litter, brushes, combs and other hygiene items, toys and other comfort items; muzzles, if necessary.
- \*A manual can opener is a necessity.
- \*All belongings should be marked with identification.
- \*If you are not evacuating your pets to a commercial animal facility, you should also include first aid supplies for your pets in the survival kit.
- \*Ask your veterinarian for an emergency care pamphlet for animals.
- \*If you plan to shelter your pets at a kennel or clinic, call before evacuating to determine if space is available. Some kennels will accept reservations early with prepaid fees.
- \*Allow sufficient time to travel from the kennel to your evacuation location after making certain that your animals are secure.
- \*If you have snakes or other exotic pets, contact local pet stores or zoological gardens, in a safe area, for assistance in sheltering your pets.
- \*Again, be prepared to supply appropriate housing for the pet (not glass) and other supplies necessary to sustain the pet for at least 2 weeks.
- \*The facility you choose should be operated by knowledgeable, capable staff and the location should be high, dry, and of sturdy construction.
- \*Throughout the evacuation and the storm, your pets will need reassurance from you.
- \*Remain calm, keep as close to their normal routine as possible, and speak to them regularly in a calm, reassuring voice.
- \*If you must evacuate without time to prepare your pet, NHC Animal Control Services will house your pet. This space is limited and should ONLY be a last resort.

- **IF YOU CAN STAY AT HOME**

- \*It is just as important to adequately plan for your pets, even if you don't have to evacuate.
- \*Carriers, collars with proper ID, and well leashes should be maintained for your pets at all times.
- \*Your pets will be most comfortable and secure in their carriers in a safe area of your home until the storm has passed.
- \*If they are not secured during the storm, and your house is damaged, your pets may escape and become disoriented, since normal landmarks and scents trails could be gone.
- \*If your pets become lost, proper ID will ensure their return to you.
- \*Place your pet food and medications in watertight containers in a cool, dry, dark place.
- \*Store adequate water for your pets.
- \*Your water source may become contaminated. To purify water, add 2 drops of household bleach per quart of water, mix, seal tightly, let stand for 30 minutes before a drink.
- \*If you bring plants into the home before a storm, be careful not to allow pets access to them, since many ornamental plants are poisonous!

- **AFTER THE STORM**

- \*Walk your pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home.
- \*CAUTION: Downed power lines and other debris pose real dangers to you and your pets.
- \*Do not allow pets to consume food or water, which may have become contaminated.
- \*Be extremely careful in using candles or oil lamps, particularly around pets. Never leave them unattended.
- \*When you know you have done everything you can do to protect all members of the family, disaster preparedness will give you tremendous peace of mind.