

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

## PET PREPAREDNESS

### AFTER A DISASTER

After the emergency and/or disaster has passed, it may be some time before residents are cleared to return to their homes and properties, so it is advised to be prepared for a stay that may include a couple of days or even a week. Keep in mind that even if your house is intact and you are allowed to return, the area may not yet be safe for your pets.

Risks after a fire include burned or cut paws, eating or inhaling toxic substances or residues, escaping because of downed fences or other damage, loss of shelter and shade, and a lack of water supply, power supply and other services. Many similar risks would be present after an earthquake or other disasters.

Keep in mind that when animals return to a changed landscape, they will be upset, disoriented, and easily stressed. Give them as much calm and normalcy as you can, and follow familiar routines whenever possible.

Often your pet will show no signs of injury, and even the gentlest may respond defensively. To prevent injury to yourself, experts recommend for you to restrain your pet and if necessary muzzle your dogs with gauze until checked out and cleared by your veterinarian. Approach stray animals or pets with caution, and call Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control if aggression is noted. Keep your pets separate from rescued strays, but please take them to an animal shelter so their loved ones will be able to locate them. If your pet is missing, take photographs and descriptions to local animal shelters and veterinarian facilities, and do not stop looking.

Below are other helpful tips – Pet Preparedness: After a Disaster

- If after a disaster you have to leave town, first responders and emergency management experts recommend take your pets with you. Pets are unlikely to survive on their own.
- In the first few days after the disaster, first responders and emergency management experts recommend to leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost. Also, snakes and other dangerous animals may be brought into the area with flood areas.
- Downed power lines are a hazard too for your pets, if they are allowed to go outside. If you see a downed power line, call your utility company and provide the call center with location and situation.

- The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency and/or disaster. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leashed dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.

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