

Stars in Action

The Mercer County MRC Newsletter



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Welcome to the first issue of the Mercer County MRC Newsletter “Stars in Action”. Each issue will highlight various aspects of emergency preparedness, with this month featuring information on preparing your pets for emergencies. We welcome your input, and encourage our MRC members to submit information on emergency preparedness (upcoming trainings, programs you have participated in) you feel may be of interest to our volunteers to include in future issues. Thank you for your service to our community, you truly are our Mercer County Stars in Action!

Stephanie Mendelsohn, BSN
Mercer County MRC Coordinator



Shown from left are Rita Larkin (Mercer Cty. MRC volunteer), Bert Steinman (Ewing Twp. mayor, and Ben Mendelsohn (MRC volunteer) staffing the emergency preparedness table at a recent rabies clinic in Ewing Township.

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PET PREPAREDNESS MONTH

June is pet preparedness month. If you have animals, it's important to plan ahead in case of emergency. If you are a pet owner, your disaster plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives. In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too. If it's not safe for you to stay behind, then it's not safe to leave pets behind either.

Take action now so you know how to best care for your furry friends when the unexpected occurs. Keep reading for tips on how to create a pet emergency plan, what to stock in your pet disaster supply kit, and how to shelter your pets in place and evacuate them if necessary.



PET EMERGENCY PLAN



- ID your pet. Make sure your pet's tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home.
- Consider microchipping your pets. Always be sure to register the microchip with the manufacturer and keep your contact information up to date with the microchip company.
- Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make a pet emergency kit.
- Identify shelters. Many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out which motels and hotels in the area you plan to evacuate to allow pets well in advance of needing them. There are also a number of guides that list hotels/motels that permit pets and could serve as a starting point. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers. Contact your veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities.
- Purchase a pet carrier for each of your pets (write your pet's name, your name and contact information on each carrier).
- Familiarize your pet with its transport crate before a crisis.
- Practice transporting your pet by taking them in for rides in a vehicle similar to one you would be evacuating in.
- Practice catching your pet, if needed.
- Keep a leash and/or carrier nearby the exit.
- Ensure proper equipment for pets to ride in the car (carriers, harnesses, pet seat-belts).
- If you do not have a car, make arrangements with neighbors, family and friends. You can also contact your local government to learn about transportation options during a disaster.
- Decide where you and your pet are going to stay. Based on the severity of a disaster, you may have two options for your pets:
 - Sheltering in place
 - Sheltering in a facility away from home (during an evacuation)
 - Plan for both of these options
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- Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.

Pet Disaster Supply kit

Consider including the following in your kit:

- Food (in airtight waterproof containers or cans) and water for at least 2 weeks for each pet
- Food and water bowls and a manual can opener
- For cats: litter box and litter
- For dogs: plastic bags for poop
- Clean-up items for bathroom accidents (paper towels, plastic trash bags, bleach-containing cleaning agent)
- Medications for at least 2 weeks, along with any treats used to give the medications and pharmacy contact for refills
 - Medical records
- Rabies vaccination certificate
- Current vaccination record
- If your pet has a microchip, a record of the microchip number
- Prescription for medication(s)
- First aid kit and other supplies
- For cats, most recent FeLV/FIV test result or vaccination date
- Summary of pertinent medical history; ask your veterinarian for a copy
- Sturdy leashes or harnesses
- Carrier or cage that is large enough for your pet to stand comfortably and turn around; towels or blankets
- Pet toys and bed (familiar items to help the pet[s] feel more comfortable).
A handout containing identification information (in the event you get separated from your pet)
- Current photo of pet
- Pet's descriptive features (age, sex, neutered/non-neutered status, color(s), and approximate weight)
- Microchip number
- Owner contact information (cell phone, work phone, home phone)
- Contact information of a close relative or friend,

A handout with boarding instructions such as feeding schedule, medications, and any known allergies and behavior problems

- Documents, medications, and food should be stored in waterproof containers



Sheltering In Place

Always bring pets indoors at the first sign or warning of a storm or disaster. Pets can become disoriented and wander away from home in a crisis. When sheltering at home with your pet, make sure the room chosen is pet-friendly in the following ways:

- Select a safe room, preferably an interior room with no (or few) windows.
- Remove any toxic chemicals or plants.
- Close off small areas where frightened cats could get stuck in (such as vents or beneath heavy furniture).
- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed animals moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink



Separate dogs and cats. Even if your dogs and cats normally get along, the anxiety of an emergency situation can cause pets to act irrationally. Keep small pets away from cats and dogs.

Emergency Evacuation

Leaving pets out of evacuation plans can put pets, pet owners, and first responders in danger. Even if you try to create a safe place for them, pets left behind during a disaster are likely to be injured, lost, or worse.

If you evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their own and if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

When evacuating:

- Activate your pet emergency plan
- Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.
- Make sure you take essential supplies from your pet supply kit (food, medications, IDs, etc.) with you.
 - Contact the resources listed in your plan (boarding facilities, family/friends, pet-friendly hotels) to arrange for accommodations for your pet (if needed).
 - Notify family members to advise them where your pet(s) will be housed during the emergency.

