



EMERGENCIES!

THE SPCA GUIDE - Plan and prepare

Issued by the

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EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

It is important to have a plan in place for your pets in case of the unexpected.

This might include a sudden family emergency that calls you away, a fire in the home, a prolonged power cut, a natural disaster such as a flood or perhaps you being involved in an accident or being suddenly hospitalised.

We're not being morbid. After all, it may never happen but if you plan ahead you can rest assured that your beloved animals will be cared for during an emergency.

ORGANISE BACK-UP NOW

- Identify a person whom you would trust with keys and access code to your property, who is willing to assist if a genuine emergency arises – a person who is trustworthy, dependable, knows your animals **and is physically capable of dealing with them.** (i.e. with boisterous dogs or with any lifting or cleaning that may be required)
- Brief the person fully including giving written instructions on the feeding regime, where food and bowls are kept, exercise plus any special requirements.
- Give the person a list of your pets, including descriptions (if more than one ginger cat, for example) plus photocopies of vaccination certificates and microchip identity forms. Your "emergency helper" should be given a list of information including your vet's telephone number and address, the phone number and address of your nearest SPCA and the boarding kennels you use.

- Assure this person that he or she will be need **in cases of genuine emergencies only – and keep to that.** Don't "cry wolf" and contact the person if you think you'll be a bit late home from work. You need to depend on his or her goodwill in a crisis.
- It is worth putting to one side or giving this person access to a limited or stipulated amount of money in case an emergency arises. He or she will then be able to pay for unexpected expenses such as a vet's bill during your unexpected emergency absence.

IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU

We hope it never will but medical emergencies are a fact of life. Accidents on our roads and criminal activity can all lead to hospitalisation and the need to have pets cared for during your absence. Be prepared for the sake of your animals.

Ensure that your name and cell phone number have been left in an accessible place – one where an emergency worker would look – with details of who to contact for the emergency care of your pets.

One idea is to insert a page in your ID book saying "In case of accident or medical emergency, Anna White 08* *** **** wishes you to contact Mr J D de Wet on 08 * *** **** to care for my pets"

There is no security risk for either party if a cell number is given.

THE UNEXPECTED AT HOME

If you had to evacuate your home right now, would you be able to locate all your animals

quickly and would you have enough carriers, leashes etc to remove all your animals safely and fast?

It is an exercise worth doing: - checking how many carrying cages or baskets you have in relation to your animals. Quite simply, are there enough?

If the emergency involves or results in a power cut, could you **find** the carrying baskets, leashes etc?

The best plan is to ensure that you have any equipment that might be needed in an accessible place and that they are all in working order.

FIRE!

If you are at home when a minor fire breaks out, the precaution of having a fire extinguisher in the home may be sufficient to save the day.

In the case of a more serious fire, we hope you will have taken our advice under “the unexpected” and that equipment to remove animals from the home is close at hand and in working order.

Precautions can be taken in case a fire breaks out when no-one is at home.

Design a sticker to be placed at the front door or any other access points, stating “In case of fire x pets inside.”

This is extremely important if you have pets without “free access” to the property: - hamsters, fish and so on.

POWER CUTS

Certain pets are effectively on life-support systems. Tropical fish depend on the filtration

and temperature control system, which work through electricity. When the electricity supply is cut off – disaster looms.

Ensure that you have a back-up system such as a battery for such emergencies.

In the case of a prolonged power cut – or even the threat of one – be prepared and have the contact number to hand of your veterinarian, your local SPCA or a friend who keeps the same kind of pet. If it is possible to transport your pets safely to where there is power, then this is the ideal solution.

If you have tropical fish, reptiles or other pets “on life support” seek professional advice AHEAD OF TIME to find out what your plan of action should be including if it is recommended to transport them, how to transport them and where they can be taken in the event of an emergency of this kind.

IT’S AN ONGOING PROCESS

Ensuring all your pets have microchip identification plus, preferably a collar and tag, is the first step.

It may be a “braces and belt” approach but we are talking about emergencies here and there are situations when animals may escape or be chased from your property. The more quickly and easily they are identified, the sooner they can be reunited with you.

Contact details change. After you have read this leaflet, check the details on your pets’ microchip form and on the collar ID tag. If any details have changed since your pet was microchipped or the ID tag made – **NOW IS THE TIME to update and change them.**

POISON SPILLS, FLOODS, FREAK OCCURRENCES GENERALLY

It is worthwhile checking that you could cope with a situation that meant you and your animals were confined to the inside of your property for a short period. In the USA, resident of affected areas have plans in case a hurricane approaches. Can all the animals be found and brought inside quickly? Do you have sufficient food for all the animals if they had to stay indoors with you for several days?

Do you have sufficient sand-boxes (cat litter trays) and anything else you might need if there was an occurrence such as a poison spill in your area? It is definitely worth checking that if something really out of the ordinary did happen, your pets would be safe and could survive.

AS THE SAYING GOES, “IT MAY NEVER HAPPEN” BUT JUST IN CASE IT DOES – HAVE A PLAN!

PLEASE DON’T FORGET TO PASS ON OUR EMERGENCY HINTS TO OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT THEIR ANIMALS