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Emergency preparedness guide for pet owners



Introduction

When Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf states in the USA of 2005, over 1800 people and millions of animals died. 44% of those who chose to stay defied evacuation orders because they could not take their animals [1].

In April 2017, the sudden flooding of Edgecumbe in the Bay of Plenty resulted in over 1,000 animals being left behind in need of rescue after the township was evacuated [2]. Many of the owners of these animals returned secretly in defiance to rescue their animals. By being a prepared pet owner you are more likely to save not only your pets, but your own life and the lives of others too.

This guide has been developed by Animal Evac New Zealand to help you as a pet owner get yourself and your pets prepared for an emergency. This will make it easier for you and your pets when the time comes to evacuate and to survive during and following an emergency.

As a pet owner you have moral and legal obligations to ensure your animal is kept safe, this guide will help you and your pets get ready for an emergency.

Mitigate

Firstly, mitigate or reduce the risks that you and your pets are exposed to. Here are some common ways you can reduce common risks in New Zealand and better protect your pets:

1. Ensure outside kennels or caging is located on higher ground to avoid floods, away from other risks such as landslides or bush fires.
2. Standing cages for birds and rodents, and tanks for fish and turtles are restrained sufficiently to ensure they do not fall over or become damaged during earthquakes.
3. Consider placing a crowd sourcing tracker (i.e. Tile) on your pet's collar and install the app.
4. Review your pet insurance policy to see if it covers disaster situations (emergency pet accommodation, behavioural trauma, illnesses such as giardia from floods etc).
5. Ensure your pets are all microchipped and their details registered with the NZ Companion Animal Register (NZCAR). There are two microchip databases in New Zealand, and the NZCAC one is for all species and is easily accessible to organisations involved supporting animal emergency situations, such as Animal Evac NZ. Make sure these details are up to date by calling 0800 LOST PET and include details for an out of region contact (as close friends and family may also be affected by the emergency).
6. You can also add your pet's photo to the NZCAR PiP facial recognition system for a small fee, which will help reunite your pet should it be found.



Prepare

Make sure you have a family emergency plan that includes arrangements for your pets.

Your plan should:

- Consider what the local risks are (your regional council can tell you).
- How do you receive alerts from your local civil defence emergency management?
 - Check your local council website or contact them for further information.
- Arrangements for the evacuation of your pets.
 - What will happen if you are away from your home and pets?
 - Family or friends you can go and stay with that you know is a safe place for your pets and theirs (i.e. compatible).
 - Does your local council have designed pet friendly shelters during an emergency?
- List emergency supplies such as a get-away kit (see our suggested list later on).
- Detail emergency contact information.

A template for your pet inclusive family emergency plan can be found on page 4.

A get-away kit should be assembled and kept ready. A suggested list is available on page 6.

Ensure your dog is trained to be accepting of being muzzled and crated (i.e. positive reinforcement).

Ensure your cats are trained to be accepting of being placed inside a pet carrier.

In the event of an emergency

1. Listen to your radio or check www.civildefence.govt.nz for updates.
2. If you think there is a risk of tsunami, do not wait for an official evacuation order, evacuate!
3. If you receive a weather warning, it is a good idea to bring in your pets inside and get pet carriers and vehicles ready in case you have to evacuate.
4. If you are worried that you may not have enough resources to evacuate, ask for help early.
5. Check your emergency plan and communicate it with other family members.
- 6. If you have to evacuate, never leave your pets behind.**
7. If you do not have a pet carrier for your cat, you can use a pillow case as a last resort
8. Do not drive with unconfined or unrestrained animals in your vehicle.
9. Check on your neighbours to see if they are okay or need assistance

Pet Emergency Plan

Owner Name	Address
Owner Mobile	
Owner Email	City

Location of **Get-Away-Kit**:

The **key risks** for my area are:

In the event of an emergency, our **preferred location** to evacuate with our pets is to:

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Notes:

If we **need help with evacuation**, we can contact the below who lives close by and knows my pets:

Name:
Address:
Phone:

And I **have / have not** agreed for them to enter my property/house to evacuate my pets in my absence.

My Next of Kin (NOK) contact is (name):	My Veterinarian/Veterinary clinic is:
NOK phone and/or address:	My Veterinarian contact details (phone number):



My local civil defence has the following **ways to alert me** to emergencies:

- Text Alert (EMA) Red Cross Hazard App Sirens
 Facebook Radio Other

If we **need help in an emergency**, we can call 111. If that does not work, we can seek help:

- From the local civil defence centre located at: _____
 Telephone the local civil defence on (phone number): _____

Pet 1 Name	Species
Breed	Colour
Gender Male Female	Year of Birth
Desexed Yes No	Microchip #
Allergies/Medication	Notes

Pet 2 Name	Species
Breed	Colour
Gender Male Female	Year of Birth
Desexed Yes No	Microchip #
Allergies/Medication	Notes

Pet 3 Name	Species
Breed	Colour
Gender Male Female	Year of Birth
Desexed Yes No	Microchip #
Allergies/Medication	Notes

Pet 4 Name	Species
Breed	Colour
Gender Male Female	Year of Birth
Desexed Yes No	Microchip #
Allergies/Medication	Notes

Print off more of this page if you have additional animals.

Get Away Kit

Here is our suggested get away kit (adapted from [3]):

- **Pet carrier or crate** for each animal, labelled with pet and owner details.
Most people only have one pet carrier even if they own multiple pets, as they generally only require one for veterinary appointments. However, in an emergency you should have one for each animal. Also have a familiar blanket or comforter inside it.
- **Muzzle and leash** for each dog.
Even friendly dogs need a muzzle as they may well refuse to be handled by emergency workers. Remember you may be frightened and dogs are well a tuned to their owners anxiety and may act protectively. A spare collar with an ID tag on it can be useful too.
- **Food and water** for each pet.
Try to use the same dry food as you normally use to avoid sudden changes in diet which can lead to diarrhoea. Bowls for water and food should also be packed; note camping type collapsible options can save space.
- **Basic grooming equipment**
Pets may become contaminated from flood water and volcanic ash, so have a brush and small bottle of pet shampoo/soap available. Grooming your pet may be relaxing for you and your pet too, during times of stress.
- **Cleaning products**
Pet wipes (safe for their face and around their eyes), plastic (poo) bags for waste, disposable gloves, and zip lock bags for storing your pet related items can be useful.
- **Veterinary records and medications**
Vaccination records including vaccination details, along with any prescribed veterinary medicines.
- **Toys**
Having a familiar toy can be comforting for your pet. It also can be a great way for you to spend time playing with your pet when it is safe to do so, to relieve stress.
- **First Aid Kit**
You should have a first aid kit that can be used for humans and animals.



Recovery

- If you have lost or found a pet, call 0800 LOST PET or go to www.lostpet.co.nz
We strongly discourage the use of other lost and found services following an emergency as it is in the interests of animal welfare that there is only one official lost and found database during a disaster.
- Your pet may be scared or be harmed. You should always consult a veterinarian if you are worried about your pet. Reach out for help if you need it.
- Pets covered in flood water or volcanic ash, need to be decontaminated (washed, brushed and dried).
- Remember your pet needs you. Ensure you try to maintain it's routine and keep up the cuddles.
- If your home is damaged, you may be unable to live in it for weeks to months.
- If you have a temporary address, ensure you update the NZCAR microchip database and in the case of dogs, notify the council of a change of address for registration purposes.

Checklist

- Emergency plan written up, stored (online, printed out, in wallet etc) and shared.
- Leash and muzzle for each dog (you may even want to keep a spare in your vehicle).
- Carrier or crate for each pet.
- Pet carrier or crates labelled with animal and owner details (available from www.animalevac.nz).
- PETS ON SITE sticker placed near your front door (available from www.animalevac.nz).
- Pets are all microchipped and details including out of region alternate contact registered with NZCAC (0800 LOST PET).
- Pet facial photo added to NZCAR PiP facial recognition service.
- Dogs are registered and details are up to date (applies to cats in some areas too).
- Get-away-kit assembled and ready.
- Photos of pet especially of its face taken (ideally saved using internet cloud services) and printed.
- Vaccination and other veterinary records taken (ideally saved using internet cloud services).
- Pets are happy to be placed in carriers/crates and dogs to being muzzled.
- If you pet wears a collar, then ensure it has a name tag including your mobile phone number.
- Consider training your cat to be familiar with a cat harness and lead.
- Identify friends and family who you could stay with if evacuated, if they have existing animals that they are compatible with your pets (i.e. they play well together and that the property is safely fenced).
- If you have a certified Disability Assistance Dog, ensure you have the official civil defence disability assistance dog tag affixed to your dog's collar. Visit the Department of Internal Affairs website or your dog's certifying organisation for further details.



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About Animal Evac New Zealand

Animal Evac New Zealand is the country's only dedicated animal disaster management charity. We work with communities to get them prepared, and can assist emergency services and civil defence during evacuations to ensure no animal is left behind. We provide our services without judgement and endeavour to help all animals affected from disaster, from households, to farms to laboratories.

You can find further information about us including how to support us at:

www.animalevac.nz

References

- [1] Fritz Institute, 'Hurricane Katrina: perceptions of the affected', no. 2010. San Francisco, CA, 2006.
- [2] S. Glassey, 'SPCA Rescue: Operation Edgecumbe After Action Report', Wellington, 2017.
- [3] A. Potts and D. Gadenne, Animals in Emergencies: Learning from the Christchurch Earthquakes. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2014.

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