

Emergency Preparedness Plan for Exotic Pets



Get ready now to care for exotic pets during an accident or natural catastrophe with this disaster relief client education handout, revised from “Ready-Pets-Go!” by [Lollypop Farm Humane Society of Greater Rochester](#).

General Checklist

- At least 1 week supply of food for each pet*
- At least 1 week supply of water for each pet**
- 2-weeks supply of medication
- Food and water bowls
- Keep a copy of each animal’s medical records
- First aid kit
- Photograph(s) of each animal
- Shoebox size litter box (ferret, rabbit)
- Vaccinations are up-to-date
- Written veterinary authorization for pet sitter and “buddy” (see *Before a Disaster Event* below)

* Store dry food in an airtight/water-proof container. For canned food, purchase the flip top cans or keep a can opener with disaster supplies.

**Do not let animals drink flood water or any other water sources that may be contaminated. If you are drinking bottled water or purified water during a disaster, that is what your animals should be drinking too.

Birds and Reptiles Checklist

- Small, secure, escape-proof carrier for each animal (optional pillowcase or cloth bag for reptiles, plus extra bags)
- External heat source for reptiles (heating pad, battery-operated heat source, extra batteries)

- Spray bottle for misting birds and reptiles in hot weather
- Toys for pet birds
- Newspaper or some other cage liner
- Portable digital thermometer or hygrometer

Preparation well in advance of a disaster event

Consider a permanent form of **identification**, such as microchip or tattoo. This technique is not always practical in all exotic pets, and unfortunately many lay volunteers may not know to look for this method of identification (Swenson 2009).

Owners should keep quality frontal and profile **photographs** of their pets on hand to identify the animals during separation. These photos should include any distinguishing markings along with family photos that show ownership in the event you need to claim your pet. Store these pictures in a re-sealable plastic bag with important insurance papers that would be taken away during evacuation.

Familiarize your pets with their **carriers** by loading them into the cages. Use food as an enticement if necessary. When an emergency comes, you want the animal to enter willingly and without delay.

Discuss your disaster plan with **pet sitters**.

Before a disaster event

Create a **disaster kit**, including water and food supplies, water and food bowls, a first aid kit, medications, medical records, familiar toys, cleaning supplies, and a contact card.

Designate a **family member** to be in charge of animals. Have them practice an emergency drill.

Develop a “mutual aid” agreement or “**buddy system**” with a neighbor, to check on each other’s animals during a disaster if one of you are out of the

area and cannot return during an emergency. Exchange information on veterinarians and have written authorization on file with your veterinarian, authorizing your pet sitter or “buddy” to get necessary emergency treatment for your animal.

Will all of your animals be able to fit in your **vehicle**? If not, develop an alternate plan.

Identify several possible **locations** where you can take your animals should you have to evacuate. Depending on the species involved, this could include veterinary hospitals with boarding space, the homes of friends and family members, and hotels that allow animals.

Note: Red Cross evacuation shelters do not allow animals, other than seeing eye dogs and other recognized service dogs.

During a disaster event



Cage all animals. Continue to feed your animal its regular diet as close to the usual time as possible to minimize stress.



Load stored emergency gear and animals.
Turn off electricity, water main, and/or gas.



Lock up and get out!