



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREPARING YOUR PET FOR HURRICANE SEASON

As we start to prepare ourselves and our homes for hurricane season, let us not forget important family members; our pets. We have learned a lot, mostly the hard way, since Hurricane Andrew in 1992 regarding the importance of disaster planning for animals, including our own pets. Most states have now included animals in their disaster planning.

Unlike many other forms of disasters such as the current oil spill in the gulf, flooding in Tennessee, and tornados in the Midwest, we normally have the advantage of preparing for a specific time of year and also receiving somewhat of an advanced warning. This does not mean wait until the last minute.

Hurricanes may last a few hours, however recovery can take weeks, even months. Your home may be without power, water or other services making it inhabitable. **Prepare in advance** if you plan or are forced to evacuate. Pet-friendly hotels, boarding kennels, relatives or friends out of the area are all possibilities.

In all likelihood, animal shelters, including Suncoast Humane Society will already be inundated with animals. Sarasota and Charlotte County has designated a few pet friendly shelters, however, they too will fill rapidly, depending on the extent of damage. Again, **you must prepare in advance**.

If you chose not to evacuate, keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers, wearing identification. Keep pet food, water, and medical supplies in watertight containers.

Your pet's disaster kit should include, food, water, medications, carrier, collar and leash **and identification**. There are many other important items such as up to date veterinary records, current photos of you with your pet, bedding, and even a description of your pet incase of separation.

Following the storm, animals may be very disoriented. Flooding, downed fences and power lines, will pose serious dangers to you and your pet. It is important to keep your pet as calm and secure as possible during this time. Do not allow them to roam loose.

Make sure your pet is micro-chipped. This is considered the most effective form of identification for your pet. A lost pet can be scanned and returned to you as long as your information is recorded and up to date. Suncoast Humane Society provides micro-chipping for \$25.00 a pet.

For further information and/or a brochure on Disaster Preparedness for your Pets, contact Suncoast Humane Society at 941-474 7884 or at www.humane.org.