

Pets in natural emergencies

Prepare early. Keep animals identified, contained and ready to move.



Animal Care Australia

WHY IT MATTERS

Australia experiences severe storms, flooding, cyclones, extreme heat, bushfires and occasional earth tremors. A plan made before the emergency can prevent panic when every minute matters

Remember these four key points to ensure you and your pets are prepared for an emergency.

THE FOUR ESSENTIALS

Plan

Food, water, medication and a place to go.

Identify

Tags, microchips, photos and phone numbers.

Evacuate

Move early with carriers, leads and supplies.

Recover

Check hazards before returning and keep pets calm.

Make pets part of the same emergency plan you use for your family. Plan for at least a week without normal access to food or water.

Build the plan before you need it:

1. Emergency Plan:

- ◆ Keep non-perishable food in waterproof containers, drinking water, kitty litter and essential medications ready.
- ◆ Decide early whether you will stay or go, and include your pets in that decision.
- ◆ Check which evacuation centres take pets. Nominate friends, relatives or boarding kennels as backup locations.
- ◆ Keep a “grab n go” kit ready and easy to load.

2. Pet Identification:

- ◆ Keep microchip details current online. If you have forgotten the number or database, contact your council or veterinary clinic.
- ◆ Use a name tag on collars with your contact details so pets can be reunited quickly.
- ◆ Keep current photographs and descriptions of your animals.
- ◆ Write your phone number on the backs or hooves of farm pets and livestock.

Evacuating with your pets:

- ◆ Take pets to a prearranged location if you can—such as boarding kennels or a friend’s house.
- ◆ Pack the kit into your vehicle. If you do not have a kit, keep cages and supplies ready and pets indoors before evacuation so they cannot run away.
- ◆ Evacuate horses well ahead of time to a prearranged location. If in doubt, be cautious and evacuate early.



PLAN AHEAD

Practice moving your pets. It takes longer than you think, and familiar carriers reduce stress.

Ready to move

Keep carriers, leads, bedding, food and water together so loading is quick and calm.

After the emergency:

Returning home can be stressful. Keep pets close, check hazards carefully and give them time to settle.

1. Check the environment

- ◆ Before returning with pets, check the house and backyard for live wires, contaminated water and sharp objects.
- ◆ Keep pets inside for the first day or so while they settle back in.
- ◆ Pets may be stressed and exhausted. Keep them close and safe, and contact your local veterinarian if you are worried.

2. If a pet is missing

- ◆ Post on social media and contact local shelters, council and emergency contacts.
- ◆ Check consistently and daily; these services may be overrun and under-staffed.
- ◆ Take a detailed description and photos, and attend shelters and pounds in person as soon as it is safe and permitted.

Heatwaves

It's so important to make sure you're all prepared during hot weather to care for your pets, livestock and even native wildlife.

All pets must have access to cool, shady areas. It is ideal to bring pets indoors (where possible) on hot days. If you're feeling warm, chances are they are too. Make sure the animals' enclosures are out of direct sunlight and protected from the sun as the shade moves throughout the day.

Small pets, such as rabbits, guinea pigs and birds, are particularly susceptible to heat. Short nosed or flat faced dog breeds are also more susceptible to heat stroke e.g. Pugs, English and French bulldogs. If allowed free run in a laundry or bathroom, they will benefit from the cool tiles. If this is not possible, drape their cage with wet towels and provide a sturdy ice pack or frozen water bottle for the animal to lean against so it can regulate its own body temperature.

Provide plenty of fresh, cool water in large water containers. Be sure to provide multiple containers in case one is spilled. Place the containers in the shade and add some ice to the water to keep it cool.

Extreme heat is a challenge for everyone especially our pets. During heat waves and hot days it is vital that you take extra precautions to keep your pets cool and prevent them from falling victim to heat exhaustion.

Never leave animals in a vehicle, in the sun, even with the windows down! Animals can't sweat; heat stress and death can occur within six minutes.

If your pet seems to be in discomfort, try wetting their feet and misting water onto their face. This is an option for dogs, cats, ferrets, poultry and caged birds as many animals control their inner temperature through their feet. It's important not to saturate a bird's feathers as this can cause them to go into shock.

VETERINARY ADVICE

If you are unsure about the health of your pet during hot days, seek veterinary advice immediately.

Bushfires

If you are leaving early with your pets, remember to prepare your pets as well.

- ◆ Always have bedding, food and water ready to go and make sure you can transport them – always put your own safety before the safety of your pets.
- ◆ Know where you could house your pets if you decide to leave early. This may include boarding kennels, a relative/friend's place or you may be able to keep them with you.
- ◆ If you choose to keep your pets with you, confine them early. Pets are safest inside a secure room, on a lead or in carriers. Make sure they have plenty of water to drink.
- ◆ Have towels and woolen blankets available to cover and protect your pets.
- ◆ Make sure your pets can be identified easily. Microchip your animals and include your details such as your phone number on collars, on the backs of your horses & livestock.
- ◆ Discuss with neighbours about protecting your pets if you are not at home during a bushfire. Keep in regular contact with your neighbours during the fire danger period to let them know your plans.
- ◆ Keep your Grab N Go Kit for pets within easy reach so you are ready to leave early.



IMPORTANT

- ◆ **Animals do not cope with smoke. Keep them indoors if possible.**
- ◆ **Aviaries and outdoor enclosures can be covered with dampened towels or hessian bags to absorb smoke & keep the animals cooler.**
- ◆ **If fire approaches follow any emergency services instructions.**
- ◆ **Avoid loading horses (or livestock) as fire is approaching. If staying, open all internal property gates, so animals can move away from immediate danger, but never open gates into roads or other vehicle access ways.**
- ◆ **With horses, remove halters and rugs. Ensure your mobile number is written on their backs (use auction crayon for this) so that you can be contacted should animals find themselves re-located away from home.**
- ◆ **Check animals feet after fire passes through, as feet are often burned on hot ground. Have first aid supplies ready.**

Storm tips

Keep pets calm during storms.

- ◆ Be aware of signs of anxiety – especially if you know your pet is scared of storms.
- ◆ Try to act as if nothing is happening and be happy and calm to set a good example.
- ◆ Don't tie them up or leave them out in the yard. Bring them inside into a 'safe space' with their bed.
- ◆ Turn on soothing music to drown out the noise.
- ◆ Give them their favourite treat.
- ◆ Chronic storm phobia sufferers should see a vet or behaviourist for treatment or training options

Grab 'n' go Kit

Pack enough supplies for 3–7 days. Allow at least two weeks of medication where possible.

Pack the kit

- ◆ Cages or carriers for each animal; muzzle, leash, lead rope or head collar.
- ◆ Food, water, bowls, feed bucket, can opener, spoon and scoop.
- ◆ Blankets, towels, bedding, coats or rugs.
- ◆ Medications, first aid, vaccination records and vet contact details.
- ◆ Litter, litter trays, poo bags, favourite toys and other essential items.

JOIN ANIMAL CARE AUSTRALIA

Animal Care Australia invites you, your club or group to join us.

ACA has quickly established itself as a reputable experience-based animal welfare organisation.

ACA is comprised of volunteers who devote many hours of their time responding to local, state and national animal welfare issues. Your input into this process is crucial.

Join ACA and help us continue to advocate for all of our animals.

ACA offers memberships for small and large animal organisations, as well as individual Supporters and businesses.

Join online or download the membership application: Join online or download the membership application:

animalcareaustralia.org.au/join/

**YOUR PLAN**

Know your routes out, where animals can stay during evacuation and clean-up, and who can help if you are away (ie: neighbours/friends). Keep your kit within easy reach.