Emergency Preparedness for Pets

Your pets are an important member of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plans. If you have a plan in place for you and your pets, you will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry when you need to make a decision during an emergency. If local officials ask you to evacuate, that means your pet should evacuate too. If you leave your pets behind, they may end up lost, injured or worse. To prepare for the unexpected follow these tips with your pets in mind:

Make a Plan

Have an evacuation plan for your pet., Know a safe place where you can take your pets before disasters and emergencies happen. Many public shelters and hotels do not allow pets inside so prepare accordingly.

Develop a buddy system. Plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.

Have your pet microchipped. Make sure to keep your address and phone number up-to-date.

Supplies:

- **Food:** Keep several days' supply of food in an airtight, waterproof container.
- **Water:** Store a non-breakable water bowl and several days' supply of water.
- **Medicine:** Keep an extra supply of the medicine your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container. to include in your plan First aid kit. Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs.

- Collar with ID tag and a harness or leash. Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag. Have copies of your pet's registration information and other relevant documents in a waterproof container and available electronically.

- Traveling bag, crate or sturdy carrier, ideally one for each pet.

- Grooming items. Pet shampoo, conditioner and other items, in case your pet needs some cleaning up.

- Sanitation needs. Include pet litter and litter box (if appropriate), newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.

- A picture of you and your pet together. If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying your pet.

- Familiar items. Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

Prepare Pets for Travel

When evacuating your home, it's important to bring your pets. Because you may need to put your cat or dog into a pet carrier, it's important that they're comfortable with the experience. Follow these tips to reduce their stress:

Leave the carrier out in places your pet frequently visits

Leave the carrier open

Feed them treats near the carrier – you can even try putting a few treats inside the carrier

Add a favorite blanket or small bed inside the carrier so it smells familiar

Make note of where your pets hide, so you can easily find them in case you have to leave your house quickly.