



Photo by Boris Dmitrienkov

Creating Your Dog's Disaster Survival Kit

By William J. Given

Dogs are an important part of our lives and many of us consider them a member of the family. They depend on us for so very much. It is our responsibility to keep them safe and that includes during emergencies and natural disasters. In the event of an emergency such as a fire, tornado or other natural disaster, you may be forced to evacuate your home. Being prepared is often critical to survival. Assembling your dog's survival kit today will give you some peace of mind and save precious minutes if or when an emergency does occur.

To create a disaster survival kit for your dog, include the following items in a sturdy container. I have two dogs and prepared my kit using a Rubbermaid® 18 gallon storage box.

- A collar or harness with current tags and leash for each dog.
- Bottles of fresh water, enough for three days.
- A three-day supply of dog food and treats, along with information on your dog's eating habits and food allergies.

- A two-week supply of any medications your dog is on, in a waterproof container plus a copy of the current prescription information on dosage and frequency.
- Clean bedding.
- Grooming supplies.
- Cleaning supplies including plastic bags, a roll of paper towels and a small bottle of disinfectant.
- A canine first-aid kit tailored to your breed and the number of dogs you care for.

In your kit, keep a file of important documents that may prove helpful in an emergency. Include copies of vaccination records and any treatment records on existing medical conditions, copies of registration papers, adoption papers, bill of sale or proof of purchase, microchip or other identification information. It is especially important to remember that having your dog micro-chipped is useless unless it is also registered with the chip manufacturer. Also, include a few recent photographs of you and your dog in case he or she becomes lost or separated. Write the breed, age, sex and color on the back. The photographs can

also be used to help prove ownership of the dog.

It will be helpful to include a list of emergency contacts, such as friends and relatives, especially someone who lives outside of the affected area. Include your veterinarian's name, address and telephone number. It may also be helpful to include information on pet-friendly motels that are a good driving distance from your home.

Once you have placed all of your items in the box, if you have room, I recommend putting one or two duplicates of your dog's favorite toys. They help put a dog more at ease in a time of heavy stress. Store the kit in an easy-to-access location next to or near his or her crate or kennel so that you can grab it quickly if you need to evacuate your home. Please make sure the crate is labeled with the dog's name and your name, address and telephone number.

We may not be able to prevent a disaster from occurring, but we can minimize the impact. A little planning can help reduce injuries, loss and suffering.