

How to prepare your pets for a hurricane

Hurricanes are a scary threat to anyone who lives near the coast.

Follow these tips before and during a storm to keep your pets safe.

✓ 1. Before the storm, find out which evacuation shelters allow pets.

Many pet owners complain that they were turned away from evacuation shelters because they brought pets. Call your local and county officials and find out where you can take your pet before the storm hits. Your veterinarian or boarding facility may also take in pets during severe weather. Find out your options and make plans for your pet well in advance.

✓ 2. Use a pet carrier.

One of the most important pieces of equipment you can have during an evacuation or severe weather event is a pet carrier. This is especially important when transporting small dogs and cats. Carriers are required at many pet shelters and can serve as a safe space for a nervous pet. Be sure to label the carrier with your pet's name, breed, sex, date of birth, your current address and contact numbers, and any important medical information.



✓ 3. Make sure you have at least two weeks of your pet's medications on hand.

In the event that a hurricane strikes, make sure you have 14 days of prescription medications, as well as heartworm and flea preventives. Pack them in a bag with your pet's essentials and write down your current administration schedule in case you have to leave your pet at a kennel or other facility. Apply heartworm and flea preventive before placing your pet in an evacuation facility—even if it's not quite time for an application. Your pet may be exposed to fleas and mosquitoes and the extra protection will only help.

✓ 4. Carry a week's worth of food and water.

If possible, divide your pet's meals into individual storage bins or bags. This will help ensure you bring enough food and allow you to assist others who may have to care for your pet during an evacuation.

Carry bottled water (24 ounces per day for a 20-pound dog and 8 ounces a day for a 10-pound cat) and bowls. Many shelters will not have adequate food and water on hand for pets.

✓ 5. Bring at least two slip leashes.

Carry the simple slip-type webbing or nylon leashes with you at all times. A frightened dog can slip out of a collar, but a slip leash can hold it securely. A slip leash can also be used to restrain a cat in a pinch. Carry an extra leash in your pocket in case someone else needs it or you lose yours.