

## **ON THE POSITIVE SIDE**

### **Are you positively prepared for any disaster?**

**Frank Bryce for the Sun-News**

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Aside from those resources which may be provided for the health of our furry family members by the community agencies, nonprofit organizations and veterinary clinics, each of us has a responsibility to be positively prepared to help ourselves and our companion animals when circumstances take a turn for the worse. A recent article on how to prepare for disasters struck a note to be shared.

These steps for disaster response are certainly worth noting and preparing for in the event we are caught in one. We do see floods and fires and quite often unusually strong gusty winds that happen quickly and without much warning. If you are caught at home or traveling, a number of easy steps you can take in advance concerning your pets and some prepared supplies will make response safer and save pet lives.

Having a safe place inside for your pets can be planned in advance for their protection. Some pet supplies will provide for their welfare for several hours or even days if necessary. It was stressed to not leave them behind if you need to relocate or evacuate, so deciding how to move everything together should be planned thoroughly.

The article gave a list of the steps to be taken to help survive such events. First was to alert rescuers to the fact that your pets are in the home with window alert stickers. Emergency responders will then know the pets are in the home, but try to also alert the emergency staff that animals have been removed if that is the case, so they do not waste time or needlessly risk injury if the pet is not there.

Make a small separate first aid kit for your pets or add recommended items to your existing first aid kit. Information for making your own is readily available at [Catster](#), [Red Cross](#), [Petco](#) and the [Humane Society of the United States](#) websites or buy a ready-made kit from a local retailer or [ASPCA](#).

Keep a small bag of supplies ready, because those high winds, fire or flood may not give you time to search for utensils, pet food or water if you are in a hurry or trapped at home. Items can also include newspaper, trash bags, crates, carriers, bowls and medications.

The need for accurate contact information is obvious and micro-chipping your pets is probably the most powerful identification tool you can use to insure your pets are returned if separated from your family. A waterproof container with the pets' records for vaccinations, medications or any other special needs, additional contact information and proof of ownership if you are unavailable is helpful.

Plan your response route, destination and know which agencies, organizations and businesses allow pets during a disaster, as some do not. There are websites that list pet-friendly accommodations, but you need to check in advance as to which will allow pets. Having a long term plan for care of the pets is a needed strategy, as things could take a while to get back to normal. This includes boarding the pets or having friends or relatives looking after them. A suggested list of helpful guides and plans can be found at [Ready.gov](#), [Petfinder](#), the [HSUS](#), [ASPCA](#), the [AVMA](#) and [RedRover](#). It is up to each of us to be prepared.

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