

SPECIAL EDITION: PLEASANT VALLEY PET CLINIC

PART TWO: RETURNING HOME AND RECOVERY

Surviving a natural disaster can be overwhelming and traumatic. Whether you sheltered-in-place or evacuated with your pets to a safe place, returning to 'normal' will take time and energy. Once an "all clear" has been given, your first task will be to take care of yourself during the recovery period. Caring for your own health and safety means you will be there for your furry friends. Here are some tips for you as well as for your pets as you recover from the disaster.

Health Recommendations include:

- Pace yourself; don't try to do too much at once.
- Drink plenty of clean water and eat well.
- Wear sturdy boots and gloves;
- Wash hands thoroughly when working in debris.
- Remember to take a moment to de-compress.

Safety issues to consider if you evacuated and are now returning home:

- Watch for washed out roads; contaminated buildings and/or water; gas leaks, broken glass, and downed power lines.
- When re-entering home: keep battery-powered radio with you. Use battery-powered flash light to inspect damage to your home. And note that flashlight should be turned on outside before entering home because battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas.
- Do not enter home if you smell gas or if flood water remains outside the building. If your home was damaged by fire, wait for authorities to declare it safe to enter.
- Do not approach or attempt to help injured wild animals. Instead, call animal control.

FOR YOUR PETS:

1. Be aware of your surroundings and protect yourself and your pets. For example, do not let them drink standing water; it may be contaminated. Be sure to keep pets inside while you assess the damage. Check for wildlife following a disaster as they will also be afraid and seek refuge. Snakes and other potentially dangerous animals displaced by the disaster may have migrated into the area (especially after flooding).

2. Help re-orient your pets to their surroundings by walking them on a leash. Do not let them roam freely as they may be confused and become lost with landmarks and familiar scents no longer present. Try to re-create their normal routine.
3. Be patient with your pets. Even the most docile pet can become aggressive under stress, which may change your pet's behavior. It is not unusual for pets to become aggressive or defensive. During one disaster, there was a 246% increase in bites from family pets due to stress. Monitor your pet's behavior and contact your veterinarian if the behavior does not subside.

Missing pets:

If you were not able to evacuate with our pets, do not rely on them to find their way home as many landmarks or familiar scents may be gone; this often results in panic and stress. Pets displaced by a disaster are frequently kept in shelters and by local organizations such as SCLAR and Red Rover and may not be nearby. Contact county Animal Welfare, EL Dorado county Animal Response Team (Animal Services) for help. Remember, FEMA supports local efforts to search for and rescue pets after a disaster and you may be able to locate your missing pet using supported resources. You can dial 211 to determine if an area has additional services which can assist in locating pets or in caring for them after a disaster.

Prepared for: Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic
530.644.2424

For more information on disaster preparedness, request emergency brochures from El Dorado County Animal Services.

Website: edcgov.us/animalservices.gov. Phone: 530.621.5795.

Go online to SCLAR.org to learn more about this volunteer organization.