

## SPECIAL EDITION

### PLEASANT VALLEY PET CLINIC DISASTER PLAN

#### PART ONE

SPECIAL NOTE: The following information has been compiled from a variety of sources including FEMA, the SPCA, the Equine Response Team (ERT) and SCLAR. We want to give special thanks to El Dorado County Animal Services for their assistance in preparing this document.

A recent study found that 85% of dog owners and 81% of cat owners said they intended to take their pets in the event of an evacuation. Part One of the article contains basic information on creating a plan before a disaster; Part Two has information what to do during and after the event. Part Three is specific for owners of horses and their care. The articles are recommendations and focus on safety.

However, facing a disaster and saving your pets takes planning. Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic is providing information to help you with that very task: disaster preparedness. The plan presented here is generic. You and your pets are unique and you may want to add items that will help you and your furry family members get through a disaster safely. The likelihood that you and your animals survive an emergency depends in great part on the planning done today. The most critical aspect of planning for a disaster is the realization that *planning takes time. Get started now.*

#### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS BASICS:**

**Assess the Situation:** the first important decision during a disaster is whether you stay put or get away. *Plan for both possibilities.* If you are told to evacuate, having a plan and disaster kit for you and your pets will be critical. Do not wait for the mandatory order. The smell of smoke or sound of thunder may make pets more fearful and difficult to load into crate or carrier. Horse owners are encouraged to evacuate with their animals at immediate sign of trouble. See the special information for horse owners at end of this article.

**Staying in place – what’s needed?** If you are able to shelter in place, do it safely and with a plan. Recognize that even in your own home, you must prepare for disaster conditions including the possibility that you may have to evacuate. Issues to consider:

- Designate a ‘safe’ room for emergency supplies and a place for your pets.
- Bring pets inside as soon as authorities say trouble is on the way.
- Close off or eliminate unsafe nooks and crannies where a pet may hide when under stress. This is especially true for cats.
- Have an emergency kit (including food and water for you and your pets) in your designated space. See items listed for evacuation in section below.
- Share your plan with all family members in case you must evacuate.
- *Above all, create a plan* in case you no longer have the option to shelter in place and must evacuate immediately. Share the information with all family members.

## Evacuation Steps:

How and where to go:

- Plan how you will assemble your pets, including live-stock like horses or alpacas. Keep vehicles filled with gas. Have a 'to-do' list specific for pet needs.
- Create a binder that will hold all important documents including information with phone numbers and addresses (such a motels, hotels, or other options for shelter).
- Secure your cat(s) *before* you begin to pack your car or truck. Use carrier to transport cat to vehicle. Gather pet 'to-go' kits.
- Designate a meeting place where all family members will meet. Be aware that emergency equipment may be blocking roads so have alternate routes in mind if at all possible. Narrow country roads make a good reason to evacuate early.
- Consider your options for lodging in advance. Do you have friends or relatives outside of the disaster area who can take you in? Remember, most public shelters do not allow pets inside. Other options may include hotel or motel accommodations or a boarding facility such as a kennel or vet clinic that is outside the evacuation area. Have their address and phone numbers your 'ER' binder.
- Develop a buddy system. Make sure a friend or neighbor is available to care for or evacuate your pets in the event you are away from home and are not allowed to return into the disaster area. Go over critical information such as knowledge about your evacuation plans and where you have your pet emergency supply kit. Often, pets will hide when under stress; point out most likely places your pets will hide. Designate specific locations (one nearby; one farther away) where you will meet in an emergency.
- An emergency kit for your pets is essential whether you shelter in place or must evacuate. This kit should include your information binder.

## Disaster pet evacuation kits should include:

1. Three days of food in an airtight, water proof container. If using canned pet food, include a can opener in kit. Do NOT store in area that gets over 75 degrees. Review and update your kit regularly to ensure contents such as food and medicines are fresh and up to date. Have extra prescription form handy in case you run out of meds and you cannot access your veterinarian clinic.
2. Three days of water specifically for your pets; they will drink more water than usual when under stress. Bowls for both water and food should be included. Keep bottled water away from sunlight.
3. Medicines and supplements: keep an extra supply of meds for your pet in water proof container.
4. A first-aid kit with such items as hand cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors; antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves; isopropyl alcohol and saline solution. If possible, include a pet first aid reference book.
5. Identification: Each pet should be wearing a collar with rabies tag and ID at all times. Make sure to have a back-up leash, collar, and ID tag in the emergency kit.
6. Copies of pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination and medical records should be kept in a clean plastic binder sleeve or water proof container. Include

a picture of you and your pets in the event your pet is lost. Place all documents in binder with other important papers.

7. Crates should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down. Sanitation supplies should include pet litter and litter box for cats; paper towels, plastic trash bags, and household bleach for sanitation needs. A favorite toy, treat or bedding will help reduce stress for your pet. While you are in your planning mode, be sure the crate is a “good” place to be. Think of ways for your pet to ‘love’ the carrier. And keep carrier handy.
8. Finally, if not already done, have your pet micro-chipped and enrolled in a recovery database. However, if a person cannot get to a place to read the chip during a disaster situation, ID information off a tag on a collar will be critical. Using *both* forms of ID are the best chance to be re-united with your pet in the event of being separated. Keep in mind that often, if pets are picked up by a rescue group, they may end up in a shelter far away. In your document binder, have pictures of each pet (breed, age, sex, color, and any distinguishing characteristics); include a picture of you with your pet together. Microchipping process includes horses (see Part Three).

Note: Make a copy of these pages and then, *continue on to Part Two* on our website, which provides helpful tips once the disaster is over. If you own horses, also check out Part 3 which focuses on the care and evacuation of horses.