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**Disaster Prep for Pets Can Bring Peace of Mind**

*AAA Mid-Atlantic says be sure to include animals in your disaster planning*

LOCATION, DATE – When preparing your home for earthquakes, floods, fires, or storms, don’t forget your four-footed, feathered, and finned friends. AAA Mid-Atlantic suggests some steps you can take now that will help ensure their safety and well-being when disaster strikes.

May 8 is National Animal Disaster Preparedness Day, and it serves as a reminder to create a disaster plan for pets. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established National Animal Disaster Preparedness Day following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when approximately 600,000 pets were either killed or left without shelter.

“While pets can suffer from sickness or injury as the result of a natural catastrophe, we hope to minimize those impacts,” said [INSERT SPOKESPERSON NAME], AAA Mid-Atlantic spokesperson. “Through education and careful planning, you can protect the well-being of your pet(s), along with the other members of your family.”

**Tips to Support the Safety of Your Pet When Disaster Strikes**

* **Apply a pet rescue alert sticker to your window**. These stickers can be purchased for dogs, cats, birds or multi-pet households. They alert rescuers and first responders there may be animals trapped inside.
* **Create an emergency supply kit.** This kit should include the essentials your pet needs. These include a three-to-seven-day supply of food, any medications they are taking, copies of their medical records (in a waterproof container), bottled water, garbage bags, a leash, a crate or carrier, and anything else necessary for your pet’s survival
* **Microchip your dog or cat.** Even an ID tag or collar can be lost or pulled off. A microchip may be the only way to be certain your pet can be identified during a disaster.
* **Investigate places for your pets to stay**. Because pets are not always allowed in emergency shelters, you may want to have a list of places your pet can stay in case of a natural disaster. A pet shelter, a pet-friendly hotel, and the homes of relatives or friends in another area are all potential places where your pet can be sheltered safe and sound.
* **Bring your animals inside.** When you hear that a storm or disaster is on its way, make sure your pets are in the house close to you. Dogs and cats can get confused and become disoriented during difficult times and may try to run away.
* **Contain your pets.** Put dogs in a room with the door closed and put cats in a carrier. The sound of thunder or the smell of smoke can frighten animals, and they might disappear under beds or in other parts of the house, making them difficult to find in a hurry.
* **Make sure birds and small animals are secure**. If you have a bird, try to get it into a cage, and make sure that its leg band, if it wears one, is properly in place. For pets like mice, hamsters, lizards, and guinea pigs, the best thing is to latch them into their cages, so they can’t escape.
* **Establish a buddy system.** Arrange to exchange keys and information with a friend who also has a pet. That way, you can check on each other’s houses and pets in case there’s an emergency when one of you can’t make it home.

Pets are an important part of every home. For more information on auto, homeowners, condo or renters insurance, call your AAA agent or 888-222-0086 to see what discounts you may be eligible for and what type of coverage you might need.

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