

Being prepared before a disaster strikes is the key to keeping you, your family and your animals safe and to avoid the devastating results with abandoned and stray animals that occurred in Louisiana and Mississippi after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Some general tips to do prior to a disaster include:

- Always keep a collar and tag or other identification on your animals. ID chipping or tattooing is also highly recommended because collars can come off.
- Keep your animals' vaccination records in waterproof containers where they are easily accessible and in your family emergency disaster storage container.
- Have at least a two-week supply of any medications taken by your animals, as well as for each family member in your disaster storage container. Check expiration dates on all medications.
- Have pictures of your animal(s) with your family members for proof of ownership.
- Have a leash or harness for each animal as well as a sturdy carrier, cage or kennel for each. Remember a small litter container for cats, and clean-up bags for dogs.
- Have at least a week supply of food and water for each animal as well as treats, and a favorite toy.
- Identify several locations where you can take your animals should you have to evacuate your neighborhood.
- Check www.petswelcome.com for motels outside of the area if you don't have friends or relatives to stay with during an evacuation.