

Survivalist Pets

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Survivalists prepare for their family's survival in many ways for many different situations. When considering the situations we may find ourselves in, we stock back supplies and gear for the youngest of our children to the oldest of our parents. We prepare for the care of our own. The need for this has been brought to the forefront recently in the Gulf States when hurricanes Rita and Katrina devastated large areas leaving many people without shelter, food, water and the necessities of survival. The inadequacies of relying on government to provide the



necessaries of life for your family in an emergency was demonstrated in this situation. Those who prepare for their family's needs will survive such emergencies provided that they are left to their own business and their survival plans are not interfered with by government.

When preparing for our family's needs it is often easy to overlook those who depend on us everyday for their needs. They are our pets. Though many animals have a working relationship with us and earn their keep on our homesteads, they are still considered pets and members of our families by a great many of us. It is important to prepare for our pets when preparing for our families when making our survival plans.

Not all survival situations are the same. Emergencies can be short term, like inclement weather, tornados, hurricanes or fires, floods and earthquakes. Emergencies can also be long term such as an economic collapse, war, earth changes or a social change such as the collapse of a social system into a full blown totalitarian regime.

In the short term emergency your pet's survival planning is not much different than your own. Basic needs are food, shelter and water. If you are riding out the emergency in place or at your home, shelter is provided by your home or storm/fallout/emergency shelter. Make space for your pets and allow them to shelter with you until the emergency has passed. In the case of storms, tornadic outbreaks and hurricanes this will last only a matter of hours. If your home is damaged, you may need to continue using your storm/fallout/emergency shelter for some time. You can move into tents and build dog (or other animal) houses to shelter your pets until your home is repaired.

In the case of earthquakes, it is preferable to remove yourself from your home/shelter because structures could be damaged and fall. After the emergency, inspect your home to make sure it is structurally sound. Beware that aftershocks could take place for several days afterwards. Again, keep alternate shelters like tents and dog houses handy.

For some emergencies, evacuation is called for. For example, if you live in a city such as New Orleans, it is prudent to evacuate before landfall of a category 5 hurricane. Do not leave your pets at home if you must evacuate. Chances are, they will be hurt or worse by the emergency. As you would make arrangements for your family by staying with relatives or procuring a retreat area, include your pets in your plans. Ask family or friends if they could arrange some room for your pets. At worst, board your pets at a kennel well outside the disaster zone.

Be aware of your surroundings and your pets. It is times of emergency that pets are very stressed and frightened. They are most likely to run off and disappear when in unfamiliar surroundings and those around them are performing unfamiliar and scary tasks. It is important to return some normalcy to their world as soon as possible. When performing tasks, do so calmly and without anxiety. Reassure your pets often and let them know you are in charge of the situation and that all will be fine. These situations will be less stressful on your pets if they enjoy part of their time in the outdoors in a tent. Perhaps on camping or hunting trips. They will know what to expect and how to behave while in an alternative shelter like a tent in this way.



Your little family members depend on you for their preparedness and safety. By including them in camping trips and supplying them with survival gear, food, water and shelter, you will fulfill your obligation to them.

Evacuations and even survival preparedness around the home are better accomplished with a survival kit. Also known as bug-out bags, these kits are packed for every member of the family and contain necessities for individual survival. Each of your pets should have a survival kit as well as the human members of your family.

Your pets' kits will differ somewhat from the human members of your family. Your pets will not use tools or build shelters and traps or fish. They will need only a few items which you will use to feed, water and transport them as well as see to their safety. Kits for your pet can either take up room in your own kit or, if your pet is a large enough breed, he/she can carry his/her kit in saddle bags or a pooch pouch. The first bit of equipment your pet should have is a collar with a tag. The tag should be inscribed with your pet's name, your name and your address and phone number. This will help to relocate you with your pet should you become separated. A photo of yourself with your pet kept by you will help to prove ownership. If you have young children, include a photo of your youngest with your pet affixed to your pet's collar. This will help to ensure that whoever finds your pet will want to reunite the pet with the child.

Also include in your pets' survival kits a leash for each pet. Leashes should be as long as possible to double as a lash to tie your pet to a tree in camp for the night. Some of our little family members are unable to walk beside us should our main mode of transportation break down. This is usually the case with cats, birds or reptiles. You will need pet carriers or cages for these pets. You will have to carry them along with you, but you can put everything they need into the pet carrier with them. Pet carriers provide more shelter than do cages and they are more convenient to carry. They will keep wind, rain and sun off your pet and can double as a shelter at night. Pets can be loaded into their carriers and then loaded quickly into your vehicle during an evacuation.



This is a small, portable cage. It collapses to be easily carried and can accompany you and your pets. Though this one holds a chicken, cats, small dogs and other small pets can be held safely inside during an emergency.

Care should be taken to make sure your pet does not climb out through the open top. A tarp would be ideal for this.

Your pet will also need a water and/or food dish. You may save space and weight by including only one dish to double as a food and water dish. Water is very important to your pet. While traveling, whether in a vehicle or on foot, make frequent stops to check your pet and give him/her water and to cool him/her down or keep him/her warm. When traveling by vehicle water may be easily carried in jugs. While on foot you should have at least one canteen per human member of your family. If you are able, carry an extra. You will also need to carry at least one water filter for the family. You are better off if every member of your family has their own personal water filter. Include at least one filter for your pets as well. You probably won't need this many, but water is an asset you can't afford not to have.

Food is another commodity that your pets should not do without. You should be feeding your pet a quality pet food and following the recommended dietary rations printed on the label. If you are producing your own food for your pets, you should be following the instructions of a reliable authority on the subject. A good example of this would be the book, *Dr. Pitcairn's Guide to the Complete Health of Dogs and Cats*. You know from your daily regimen the dietary requirements of your pets, therefore you know how much food to pack for your pet for each day you plan to be gone. During an extended emergency, you may not be able to carry as much food with you as necessary. If the emergency does not disrupt the infrastructure, food may be purchased when outside disaster areas. As in any emergency, your evacuation plans must include a safe area where you and your pets can go during the emergency. The safe area must be pre-stocked with survival essentials including food.

The above is the basic essentials of a survival kit for your pets. Some pets may differ in their needs. For instance, parakeets need grit and cuddle stones. Keep all of your pets needs in mind when putting together their survival kits. Keep in mind your pets' medical needs as well. For instance, I have a Skye terrier that is diabetic. I include needles and test strips in his kit. I also have to include insulin which I must store in a refrigerator. To pack the insulin in an evacuation, I must store it in a cooler to carry with me. I also carry his prescription and the phone number of

his vet, so I can have the prescription refilled at any destination with a vet's clinic.

A first aid kit is also necessary to include in your pets' preparations. This can be included in your family's kit which should include items for wound care, disinfection and common ailments. Beside such items as you keep for your family, store extra razors for shaving wound areas, gauze for absorption and bandaging, iodine, rubbing alcohol, antibiotics, sutures, hemostats, surgical kit, saline solution, muzzles to fit each of your pets, flea and tick repellent and tea tree based anti-itch ointment. Ointments for minor lacerations and abrasions based on plantain and olive oil will help heal chafed paw pads and scratches.

The pet survival kits, with your actions, will help your pet survive the short term, but beware what is often envisioned as the short term. FEMA pamphlets are calling for a three day supply kit ~~at minimum~~. America has experienced many emergencies we think of as short term, yet has lasted for a good deal more than three days. In most instances, a three day kit will fall far short of supplying a family with pets for an emergency. Prepare your kits to supply you for a three week short term situation. Most natural disaster areas will begin to recover by this time. If they have not, you will need to implement your long term survival plans.

Survivalists will have one of two basic long term plans. They either live where they plan to ride out a long term emergency or they plan to evacuate to a safe area. If you plan to evacuate, keep your stock of long term survival supplies at your safe area. Your survival kits will see you through until you reach your long term stocks and shelter. If you plan to ride out any emergencies where you live, have long term supplies in place. Your long term stocks for your pets will be much like your own, again without the tools. Where you will include tools for food production, defense and a host of other necessary chores, your pets will only need water, shelter and food to perform their tasks on your survival homestead.

Water should be provided on sight, via spring, stream, river or well. The deep water well with an alternative hand pump backup being the best option. Again, filters like the Aqua-Rain or Berkey are necessary and are the best brands of filters. Extra filter elements to last several years are also necessary. Food will ultimately be provided by your production on the homestead. Farming, gardening and animal husbandry, with which your pets will help in the chores, will provide your family and your pets with food. Your pets will guard your herd/flock and gardens from pests and alert you to raiders. Refer to *Dr. Pitcairn's Guide to the Complete Health of Dogs and Cats* for instructions on preparing home grown food for your pets. Shelter for your pets will be provided by your home, outbuildings or barn.

As you would prepare for crop failures and food shortages for yourself, also prepare for your pets. You stock back at least a year's supply of beans, wheat and other bulk foods for each member of your family. You should follow the same principal for your pets. Purchase at least a year's supply of canned food for each of your pets now. If you prepare your own pet food, can and stock back a year's supply now. Keep extra medicines and supplies. Provide a first aid kit and make friends with your vet. If/when the balloon goes up, let your vet know he/she can count on you for supplies and necessities from your homestead/retreat. In return, they will treat your pets well and help you with medical supplies.

Being a responsible pet owner means caring for your pets through all possible situations. This includes survival situations as well as in good times. The time to prepare for bad situations is before they happen. Begin planning for your family and include your pets now, before times become bad.