



## TORNADO EMERGENCY PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR PET OWNERS

Whether you are at home, at work or out and about when a tornado warning strikes, it can be a scary moment and your family's safety is your first concern. Our pets are family, too, and if it came down to it, do you know what you would do with your pets if a tornado was suddenly heading your way? Or do you have the supplies to help keep them fed and safe if you needed to hunker down during a storm? Below are some tips and tricks for how to prepare for your pets before a tornado and what to do in the middle of a tornado.

### WHAT TO DO BEFORE TORNADO SEASON

**Make a plan and share it with your family.**

It's easy for panic to set in if a tornado warning is issued for your area. Having a written or verbal plan of action can help take your stress away and keep everyone safe. Here are some things to consider if disaster strikes:

**Get your dog on a leash and/or cat in a secure carrier.** This will allow you to keep them with you if they get scared and try to hide, or if you need to evacuate. It also helps to have your dog trained to listen to your commands so they obey in emergency situations.

**Make sure your hiding area is pet safe.** Remove any toxic chemicals (fertilizers, rat poison, etc.) and tools that could hurt your pet.

**Block any areas of your hiding zone that your pets could escape through or hide in and be hard to reach.**

**Prepare an emergency kit** prepared just for your pet that includes;

- clean water - enough for at least 3 days
- non-perishable food (canned food) and bowls.
- can opener (if needed).
- kennel for your dog.
- litter and litter box.
- potty pads.
- have medications handy to grab.
- blankets/towels.
- photograph of your pet and proof of ownership.
- vaccination records.
- basic first aid kit - bandages, gauze, disinfectant to clean a wound, etc.

- toys.
- extra leash(es).
- trash bags.

Keep these items in an accessible location for use at home, or keep them packed up for easy loading during an evacuation.

**Know your evacuation route.** If you are evacuating it's important to know that where you are headed accepts pets.

- Know which hotels/motels or shelters along your evacuation route accepts pets. Many emergency shelters do not accept pets, so have an idea of which shelters will accept pets. Your county website should have this information.
- If you have family outside of the storm area, yet still accessible by car, ask if they would be willing to keep your pets safe until a storm passes.

**Give your pets proper identification.**

It's important that pets have I.D. on them at all times, and normally this comes in the form of a collar with a tag that includes name and phone number. Another great option that stays with your pet forever and can't be lost is a microchip. When your lost pet is taken to an animal shelter or veterinary clinic, they will scan your pet for a microchip and read its unique code. This code is stored with your pet's profile and linked to your contact information.

**Place a pet rescue window decal near your front door.** The ASPCA offers free pet safety packs which "alerts rescue personnel that pets are inside your home." You can order one for free on the ASPCA website: <https://secure.aspca.org/take-action/order-your-pet-safety-pack>. (If you evacuate with your pets, write "evacuated" across the sticker before leaving your home if at all possible.)

**Fill up the gas tank in your vehicle.**

## WHAT TO DO DURING OR AS A TORNADO APPROACHES

**Stay calm.**

If you are staying home, find a secure, safe place inside and hunker down.

**Make sure your pet is microchipped.**

**Execute the plan you created with your family.**

**Gather your pets If your pets are outside.**

Find them as soon as possible so they don't become frightened from the storm. Keep them with you at all times. Dogs should be on a leash and cats should be in a crate or on a leash.

**Grab your emergency kit and any other last necessities your pet will need.**

**Stay away from areas with windows or where anything can fall and hurt you and your pets.**

**Look or listen for evacuation orders.**

Have a battery operated radio handy to hear the news in your area.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER A TORNADO HAS HIT YOUR AREA

- Pay attention** to your pets' behavior and know that they are scared.
- Check your pets for injuries.**
- When returning to your property or emerging from your hiding area, **keep your pets with you at all times.** It is not safe for them to roam free yet.
- Get your pets back into a normal routine** as soon as you are able. If you notice any behavioral problems or they just don't seem to be acting normal, contact your veterinarian.