



Emergency:

How to prepare your cat for an emergency

Emergencies can strike at any time, anywhere and without warning. To make sure that everybody in your family will be safe, including your pets, it is important to have an emergency plan, be prepared and know what to do. Here are some simple and practical steps you can take to prepare your cat for an emergency and keep everybody in your family safe.

Things to consider before an emergency

Include your cat in your family's Emergency Survival Plan.

As with all emergency plans it is important to practice them, so everybody knows what is required of them to evacuate calmly and safely. By practicing your plan, you will make sure you have not forgotten anything, and it is a good opportunity to make the necessary improvements to your plan.

Arrange a safe place for your cat to stay.

This can be a boarding facility or with family or friends that live in a safe area. Emergency situations are unpredictable, and it can be helpful to have a few options organised depending on the type and location of the emergency. Having a prearranged safe place for your cat to stay will mean you have one less thing to worry about if you need to evacuate.

Taking your cat to an evacuation centre should be your last resort. Not all evacuation centres in Tasmania will be able to accept pet animals, this is determined at the time of the event and is specific to each centre. Evacuation centres are likely to be a stressful environment for your cat.

Train your cat to go into a cat carrier and get them used to being in a moving vehicle.

Cats can be challenging to catch during an emergency because they instinctively hide from danger and can sense stress in the household. If you can't get your cat into their carrier, you might have to make the difficult decision to leave them behind. To reduce the chances of that happening, you can train your cat to be comfortable with their carrier and to go into their carrier on command. Not only will it help during emergencies, but it will also make visits to the vet easier. Training is a

great way to keep your cat's mind active, and it's never too late to start training them.

It is important to know your cat's 'safe space' in the house - the place where they might seek shelter during stressful situations. Knowing where your cat might be hiding will save you valuable time searching for them during an emergency event.

Keep their vaccinations and flea treatments up to date.

It may be necessary for your cat to have an up-to-date vaccine record and flea treatment before entering certain boarding facilities.

Make sure your cat is microchipped and has a collar with ID tag.

This will increase the chances of being reunited with your cat if they get lost or run away during an emergency. Always make sure you update your contact details with the online microchipping registry when you move to a new house or change phone numbers. Visit www.petaddress.com.au to find out where your cat's microchip details are lodged.



Prepare an emergency kit for your cat.

Preparing an emergency kit for your cat is an essential part of your planning process. It will ensure you have everything you need to activate your plan quickly. The kit should include:

- Cat carrier with a label that includes your contact details, your cat's name, sex, age, breed, features and medical requirements.
- Food and water bowls and at least one week's supply of food your cat is familiar with, and some spare bottles of water. Make sure any canned food has pull-tabs and that none of the food will need to be refrigerated.
- Cat litter and tray.
- Medications and clear written instructions on how to use them.
- A pet first aid kit. You can ask your vet what items should be included to suit your cat.
- Photograph of your cat and a clear description of their sex, age, breed, features, and name. In the event they are lost, you will have this ready to make a poster or to post on Facebook.
- Blankets/bedding.
- Toys.
- Brush/comb for long-haired cats.
- Vaccination certificates.
- Contact details for your vet, local animal shelter, boarding facility and friends or family where your cat might be relocated to.
- Feliway spray (optional). Feliway is a synthetic copy of the feline facial pheromone, which can help reduce stress in cats and make them feel safe and secure.

During an emergency

If your cat is outside, you should bring them indoors at the first sign of a potential emergency and keep them indoors until the emergency situation has passed.

Having your cat indoors means you know they are safe, and you can immediately put them in their carrier if an evacuation order comes through.

Evacuating during an emergency is a stressful situation. To reduce the risk to yourself and your cat, consider relocating your cat to their arranged safe location well before a possible evacuation order. Whether this is a boarding facility or friends or family, knowing your cat is safe means one less thing to worry about if you do have to evacuate.

If you are aware of an emergency situation developing in your area, you should phone ahead to confirm arrangements with your cat's safe location. This way you can make sure they have room to accommodate your cat and are not under the same threat as you. If they know your cat is coming, they can prepare for your arrival, making the process as smooth as possible.

When the time comes, put your cat in their carrier, place the carrier and your cat's emergency kit in the car, and calmly evacuate.

IMPORTANT!
Do not leave your cat alone in a hot car, even in an emergency.

If you need to leave your cat behind

Unfortunately, you might not always be able to evacuate with your cat due to circumstances beyond your control. As upsetting as this may be, it is important to remain calm and evacuate your family safely.

Here are some steps you can take if you are forced to leave your cat behind:

- Provide each cat with food and water for at least one week. Make sure you provide it in several places in the house and in bowls that cannot be tipped over.
- Leave a note on your front door or mailbox to advise emergency personnel there is a cat inside the house. Be sure to include your name, mobile number, how many cats are in the house and their names.
- In the event of a flood, you will need to create a safe space for your cat that is high and will remain dry. This can be done by providing access to the second

floor of your house or by arranging furniture to allow access to tall benches, cupboards or shelves. You will need to provide your cat with adequate food and water in these areas. Before you leave, make sure you turn off the electricity to the house.

Sometimes you might not be able to find your cat to bring them indoors, or your cat has escaped the house during the preparations to evacuate. If your cat is still outside when the evacuation order comes through, you should provide enough food and water outside for at least a week. Make sure you provide it in several places around your house so your cat has easy access.

Natural disasters and emergency evacuations are stressful situations for everyone involved but having an emergency plan in place will help keep everyone as safe as possible.

For more information visit: www.tassiecat.com

Thanks to RSPCA Australia for their information on emergency planning for pets.

