

# Master of Disaster



## Disaster strikes! Are you prepared?

No one likes to think about wildfires, floods or earthquakes – not even adults.

Do you know what can make disasters seem less scary? Going one step further: from thinking about them to actually planning for them!

It's a bit like school. Say that you're nervous about an upcoming math test. But, even though you're worried, you study hard for it. Now you've got an idea of what sorts of math questions your teacher might ask you. And guess what? You're readier to take the test than if you hadn't studied at all.

That's what preparation does: it gives you confidence to face new challenges.

## Become a Master of Disaster!

Do you know what else can help you feel less frightened about disasters? Thinking of those who'll be counting on you in an emergency – your pets! They'll need you to help keep them safe.

When a disaster happens, you probably won't have time to gather all the supplies you'll need for your pets. Put together a "grab-and-go" emergency kit ahead of time. Use a backpack or plastic tote so everything's in one place.

## Here's what should go in your pet's emergency kit:

- Sturdy crate or carrier
- Food for at least a week
- Water for at least a week
- Manual can opener and spoon for wet food
- Food and water bowls
- Plastic bags for waste disposal
- Paper towels and disinfectant
- Blankets or towels
- Toys
- Treats
- Pet first-aid kit
- Copies of your pet's vaccination records
- Recent photos of your pet
- Short bio of your pet
- List of license numbers, microchip numbers and tattoo codes
- Medications for at least a week
- Emergency phone numbers and addresses

Dogs: 4 litres/day  
Cats: 1 litre/day

Collapsible dishes take up less space.

In case of accidents.

Something that smells like home – and you! – can be comforting.

It's a good idea to also have a photo of you and your pet together to help prove she's yours.

Store your pet's medications in a water-tight container. Include any special instructions!

Make a list of places your pet can be taken in case you need to evacuate. Not all evacuation shelters allow pets. This list can include pet-friendly hotels, boarding kennels, animal shelters, veterinary clinics, family members and friends.

**For dogs:** Pack a six-foot leash as well as a long lead.

Frightened dogs can sometimes slip out of their collars.

Even the friendliest dogs can bite when they're afraid.

### For cats:

- Litter box and scoop
- Cat litter for at least a week

### For small animals:

- Water bottle and water bottle hanger
- Small hiding box
- Bedding for at least a week



## Master of Disaster Contest

Tell us three things that you're planning on putting in your pet's emergency kit, and we'll enter you in a draw for a pet first-aid kit! Email your answers, along with your name, age, address and phone number, to [kids@spca.bc.ca](mailto:kids@spca.bc.ca) or mail them to

**Bark! Master of Disaster Contest**, 1245 East 7th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1. Contest is open to kids ages 13 and under and ends June 30, 2017.

## Preparing is caring!

Visit [gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC](http://gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC) for even more tips on becoming a **Master of Disaster**. You can also download and fill out a Pet Plan for your pets.

Check out your city's website on emergency preparedness. During a disaster, your city might send out updates or have special places set up where pets can stay.





**Disaster  
Strikes!  
are you**

# PREPARED?

## Your pets count on you!

Does your family have a plan in case of a flood, earthquake, fire, extended power outage or other disaster where you may have to evacuate? Having supplies and a plan before a disaster will give you peace of mind, save precious time and maybe even your pet's life.

Don't expect rescue centres to have supplies for your pets – make it your responsibility. Prepare your pet emergency kit using the checklist provided. (See next page.)

When preparing your supplies, remember that small animals, including your cats, need individual carrying cases. No matter how mellow your cats usually are, when they are frightened, they may flee and get lost.

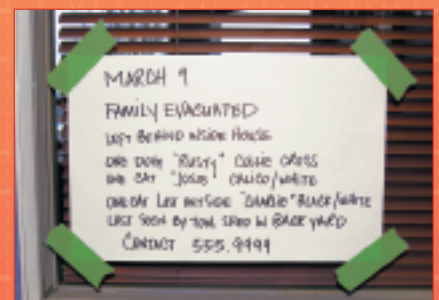
## When you can't take your pet

Try your best to take your pet with you. However, rescue authorities know when it is critical to evacuate a disaster area and you must listen to them. If you cannot take your pets with you, it's not your fault. Take comfort that the BC SPCA and other animal rescue groups will look for pets left in homes and provide care for these animals.

- Post a highly visible sign in a window or on your door to let rescue workers know how many pets were left behind. Include a description of each pet (e.g., dog, "Buster," brown; cat, "Fluffy," grey). See the sample below.
- Leave plenty of water in a large tip-proof container inside and outside your home.
- Leave dry food in large open containers (or in timed feeders – check local pet stores).
- Do not tether (tie up) dogs or cats as the chances for survival are greater if they can escape easily. Leave barn doors open and open gates for farm animals.
- If your cat is outdoors when a disaster occurs, chances are your cat will be hiding somewhere in a safe place, so you might not be able to find him. If adults tell you it is time to leave, leave a sign on your window or door, explaining you have a lost cat outside and include: his name; colour; and where you last saw him.

## When it's safe to go back to your home:

- Immediately check with your local animal shelter to report your pet missing. They may have already rescued your pet.





## Special Considerations for Farm Animals

If your family has farm animals, make a plan today. Don't wait until it's too late. In most cases you will not be able to take your farm animals with you but you may be able to transport them to a safe shelter. Each city/municipality will be different. Do your research and try contacting the following groups for assistance:

- ✓ Farm associations
- ✓ 4H Clubs
- ✓ Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

- Make and distribute "lost pet" posters.
- Ask your neighbours to keep an eye out for your pet(s).
- Don't give up, sometimes lost pets turn up months after they have gone missing.
- Visit [www.sPCA.bc.ca/kids](http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/kids) for more information about finding a lost pet.

SPCA staff helping animals after a disaster.



COURTESY LANGLEY ADVANCE NEWS

### Important!

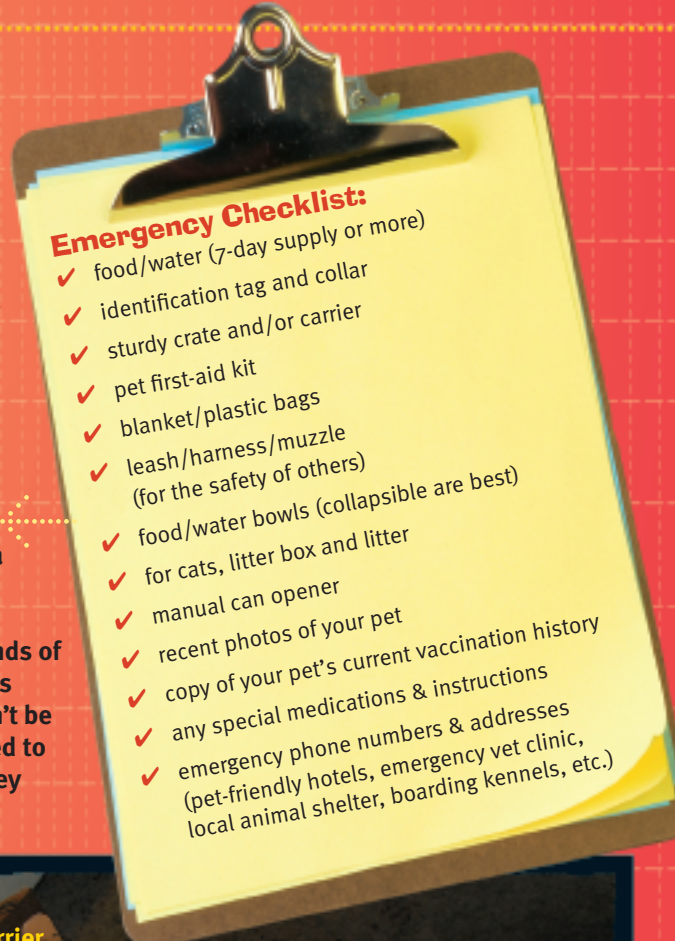
All pets need a permanent form of identification at all times (either a tattoo or microchip) plus an ID tag with your pet's name and a phone number (cell number is ideal). In a disaster you may be separated from your pets and with ID you can be reunited.



### Fast Fact!

In the Katrina hurricane disaster thousands of animals couldn't be returned to

their families because they never had ID.



#### Emergency Checklist:

- ✓ food/water (7-day supply or more)
- ✓ identification tag and collar
- ✓ sturdy crate and/or carrier
- ✓ pet first-aid kit
- ✓ blanket/plastic bags
- ✓ leash/harness/muzzle (for the safety of others)
- ✓ food/water bowls (collapsible are best)
- ✓ for cats, litter box and litter
- ✓ manual can opener
- ✓ recent photos of your pet
- ✓ copy of your pet's current vaccination history
- ✓ any special medications & instructions
- ✓ emergency phone numbers & addresses (pet-friendly hotels, emergency vet clinic, local animal shelter, boarding kennels, etc.)



sturdy crate and/or carrier

emergency numbers

litter box & litter

pet first-aid kit

food

water

food/water bowls

manual can opener

medications

leash & harness

current vaccination history

identification tag & collar

recent photos of your pet



Buy your Pet First Aid Kit at [www.shopbcspca.ca](http://www.shopbcspca.ca)

# Behind the fire lines



Cruelty officer Eileen Drever rescues a horse near Williams Lake.

## SPCA emergency centre in Prince George

There was limited space for pets at evacuation centres in Prince George. To help, staff quickly set up a special animal rescue centre in addition to using the SPCA shelter. "We converted an empty warehouse into an emergency centre for animals," says Iris Ting, who oversaw the whole operation. "Within 24 hours we were looking after 30 dogs, which ballooned to 45 a day later." Staff and volunteers worked around the clock – feeding, cleaning and taking dogs for walks – for several weeks until the evacuation order was lifted.



Farm animals needed water, food and fresh bedding.

**This summer, wildfires ripped through B.C.'s forests,** forcing thousands to flee their homes. As families scrambled to get away, some had no choice but to leave pets and farm animals behind. "In some areas, people had less than 10 minutes' notice – they literally had to just grab and go," says Liz Dighton, manager of the Williams Lake SPCA. The BC SPCA mobilized more than 30 staff to rescue animals left behind and assist those at evacuation centres.

## Base camps behind fire zones

SPCA special provincial constables set up three base camps in evacuated areas. "Behind the fire lines, the smoke was intense," says Shawn Eccles, head of the cruelty investigations team. Constables worked with police and fire officials to check on animals left behind and rescue ones wandering around. "We helped not just cats and dogs but also ferrets, fish, birds, snakes and small animals. We also helped lots of farm animals – goats, sheep, pigs, horses, cows and chickens."

BC SPCA cruelty officers set up three base camps in the evacuation zones.



Lots of animals needed help behind the fire lines.

## Chickens in trouble

"We had one individual call us to check on his chickens," Shawn recounts. "We made a few visits to be sure his birds had plenty of feed and water." Afterwards, with tears in his eyes, the farmer said, "I can't believe you would risk your life to take care of my chickens – thank you so much," and gave Shawn a great big bear hug.

## Daring apartment rescue

"We got lots of requests from evacuees to check on their pets," says Shawn. "We got permission to enter homes, sometimes climbing through windows." In one case, SPCA special provincial constable Cristie Steele was asked to help a cat in an apartment building. "I ended up getting help from the fire department. I had to climb up a bucket ladder carrying litter and a big bag of food," says Cristie. "I just tried to focus on helping the kitty and making sure my foot didn't slip through the ladder because it was very high up!"

## Grateful horses

In 150 Mile House, an area with lots of small farms, the BC SPCA received calls to check on farm animals in evacuation zones. Leiki Salumets and Matt Affleck, part of the cruelty investigations team, made sure horses, cattle and pigs – even outdoor cats – had enough food and water. "When we arrived at one farm, the horses were so excited to see us," says Leiki. "One thing that was obvious was that the animals – companion and farm – were also missing contact with people."



## Bird on-flight to safety

Sampson, a cockatiel, was left behind when his guardians had to immediately flee the fire zone. After receiving a frantic call for help, SPCA constables managed to rescue Sampson. The little bird stayed at the SPCA's base camp – a small camper trailer – for a few days until the guardians could arrange to meet at the highway roadblock many kilometres away. When finally reunited, everyone was delighted!

## When the smoke cleared

What will the BC SPCA team remember most about rescuing animals behind the fire lines? How everyone – animal rescue groups, RCMP and fire fighters – came together to offer help. And – when the smoke cleared – how grateful and relieved people were to return to find their animals safe and sound.

Cruelty officer Cristie Steele got the fire department to help her get to a cat in trouble.

