Animal Emergency PREPAREDNESS

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan should include your pets.

BEFORE A DISASTER

Ask friends, relatives, or others outside your area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable together; but be prepared to house them separately.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency. Include 24-hour phone numbers.

Include pet supplies as part of your family preparedness kit.

Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations. Bergen County does offer pet friendly shelters with your domestic pet sheltered in an area isolated from the family shelter but in the same facility. The only exceptions to this policy are service animals who assist people with disabilities.

CREATE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT FOR YOUR PET

In the event of an emergency you may have to leave your home quickly. Your pet relies upon you to take care of him or her. Assemble this kit now.

- ☐ Medications & medical records in a waterproof container
- ☐ Sturdy leashes and/or carriers
- ☐ A 3 day supply of food and potable water with bowls
- ☐ A picture of your pet(s) in case they get lost
- ☐ Information on feeding times, medical and/or behavioral issues
- ☐ Litter and litter box for cats
- ☐ Pet beds & toys, if easily transportable
- ☐ Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars that are securely fastened and have ID tags containing up-to-date information. Attach to the collar or tag the phone number of a friend or relative outside the area in case you must leave your home and become separated from your pet in an emergency.

DURING A DISASTER . . .

Bring your pets inside immediately. Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can keep them from running away. **NEVER LEAVE A PET OUTSIDE OR TIED UP DURING A STORM!**

If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some precautions you must take; but remember that leaving your pet at home alone can place your animal in danger. Confine your pet to a safe area inside. Place a notice outside in a visible area advising there are pets in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.

BIRDS

Transport in a secure travel cage or carrier.

In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside.

During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the bird's feathers periodically.

Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content.

Have leg bands and a photo for ID.

Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area.

Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

REPTILES

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site.

If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you.

Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad.

When transporting house lizards, follow the same directions as for birds.

SMALL MAMMALS

Hamsters, gerbils etc. . . should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered.

Take bedding materials, food, bowls and water bottles.

AFTER A DISASTER

In the first few days after a disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused and lost.

The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard with access to shelter and water.

Bergen County Office of Emergency Management
201-634-3100 or www.bcoem.org