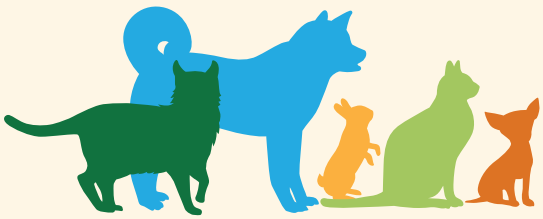

Are You and Your Pets Safe in Case of Disaster?

Disaster Preparedness Guideline for Humans and Pets
<For General Pet Owners>

環境省
Ministry of the Environment

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Introduction

Disasters occur suddenly.
Daily preparations are indispensable for overcoming disasters with your pets.
This brochure studies various issues that happened to pets and their owners in past disasters and explains the measures which pet owners should take.

Let's think about what you can do to protect yourself and your pets when a disaster strikes.

Past major disasters

1990S'～2000S'

1991 Eruption of Mt. Unzen Fugen-dake

1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake
An earthquake of magnitude 7.2 hit the big city. Some 9,300 animals (4,300 dogs and 5,000 cats) were affected along with people.

2000 Eruption of Mt. Usu
Over 300 animals were left alone after the evacuation and became a problem.

2000 Eruption of Miyakejima Island (3 other disasters)
About 250 animals were evacuated from the island with the residents.

2001 5 disasters (1 earthquake/tsunami, 2 storms/floods, 1 snow disaster, 1 other)

2002 4 disasters (3 storms/floods, 1 other)

2003 6 disasters (3 earthquakes/tsunami, 3 storms/floods)

2004 Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Earthquake (11 other disasters: 1 earthquake/tsunami, 10 storms/floods)
A major earthquake of seismic intensity 7 and over 10 aftershocks of seismic intensity 5 or higher occurred, affecting more than 100,000 people and 5,000 animals. The Economy Class Syndrome became a problem among people who evacuated in cars.

2005 7 disasters (3 earthquakes/tsunami, 3 storms/floods, 1 other)

2006 5 disasters (4 storms/floods, 1 snow disaster)

2007 8 disasters (4 earthquakes/tsunami, 4 storms/floods)

2008 5 disasters (2 earthquakes/tsunami, 3 storms/floods)

2009 5 disasters (2 earthquakes/tsunami, 3 storms/floods)

2010 3 disasters (1 earthquake/tsunami, 2 storms/floods)

2010S'～

2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (6 other disasters)
An earthquake of magnitude 9.0 and tsunami in coastal areas killed many people and pets. Some of them were hit by tsunami when they returned home to take their pets after evacuation. There were various problems such as pet-related troubles at evacuation centers and rescue of stray animals.

2012 8 disasters (7 storms/floods, 1 snow disaster)

2013 15 disasters (3 earthquakes/tsunami, 11 storms/floods, 1 snow disaster)

2014 25 disasters (4 earthquakes/tsunami, 10 storms/floods, 8 snow disasters, 2 volcanic eruptions, 1 other)

2015 19 disasters (6 earthquakes/tsunami, 7 storms/floods, 1 snow disaster, 5 volcanic eruptions)

2016 Kumamoto Earthquake (15 other disasters)
Several earthquakes of seismic intensity 7 or higher were recorded. Many people evacuated in cars or tents for fear of building collapse, and the Economy Class Syndrome and heat strokes became problems. Some evacuation centers were not prepared enough to receive pets, and securing a rearing environment was difficult.

2017 16 disasters (4 earthquakes/tsunami, 6 storms/floods, 5 snow disasters, 1 volcanic eruption)

2018 Heavy rain of July 2018 (9 other disasters) << As of late July, 2018 >>

Damage

Collapse of buildings by earthquakes

Damage by tsunami

Cracks by earthquakes

Floods by heavy rain

When disasters strike

Disasters occur suddenly. They take away the normal life and you will have to live an inconvenient, anxious life you have never experienced.
For those who have never experienced disasters, it is hard to imagine what is like to be affected by a disaster and the kind of problems you will face.
The following cases are pet-related problems that occurred in past disasters.

At the time of disaster...

- The house collapsed or furniture fell over, prevented pets from escaping and killed them.
- Glasses scattered on the floor, injuring both people and pets' feet.
- Cats kept outdoors went missing on the day of disaster and could not be evacuated with the owners.
- The owners did not know where pet-friendly shelter were located.

At evacuation centers...

- There were relief goods for people, but there was no pet food for some time after evacuation.
- Had to evacuate in cars because dogs barked and bothered other people.
- Had troubles with other evacuees because of pets' abandoned waste and scattered hair.
- Pets did not eat the pet food provided as the relief goods.
- Had difficulties getting a specific food (therapeutic food, etc.) after evacuating with pets.
- Dogs were not used to the cage and were under extreme stress.
- Dogs did not use toilet sheets.
- Pets were not used to other people/places/animals and could not be entrusted anywhere.
- Had to worry about infectious diseases, as many pets were not vaccinated.

For pet owners

Only you can protect your pets at the time of disaster.
And you cannot protect your pets unless you are safe.
The following three points are essential.

1. **Securing your own safety leads to the appropriate care of your pets at the time of disasters.**
2. **Correct rearing of your pets at normal times (health, training, etc.) is the most effective way to overcome disasters.**
3. **At the time of disasters, calm down your pets and evacuate with them while preventing them from escaping and being injured.**

<Disaster prevention keywords: self-help, mutual assistance, public assistance>

Self-help: Protecting yourself and your pets
Mutual assistance: Mutual assistance with neighbors and other pet owners, wide-area cooperation, assistance by various associations
Public assistance: Assistance by administrations etc.

In large-scale disasters, self-help and mutual assistance become indispensable while waiting for assistance by administrations and other public institutions.
You are responsible for securing your own safety, protecting your pets' safety and health, and taking care of them appropriately without bothering other people.

Let's check the actions which should be taken at the time of disasters on the flow chart.

Flow chart of evacuation with pets

What will happen if a disaster strikes now? This flow chart shows the steps of evacuation with pets for the first week after the disaster.

01 Daily preparations

Training and health manageme -nt of pets

Disaster prevention and stockpile at home and rearing places

02 Disaster occurs

Hit by the disaster together at home

Hit by the disaster together outside

Hit by the disaster separately while you are outside

03 Secure safety and confirm situation

Able to go home

Unable to go home

Able to go home

Unable to go home

Secure safety and prepare for evacuation

Secure safety and prepare for evacuation

Found at home

Not found at home

Able to ask protection for pets

Unable to ask protection for pets

04 Judge the necessity of evacuation

Remain at home

Evacuate with pets

Remain at home

Remain at home

Request protection for pets from family/friends and evacuate alone

< On the day of disaster >

note

- Evacuation with pets designates the action of evacuating. It does not mean rearing pets in the same place as people at the evacuation center.
- Evacuation centers include designated emergency shelters and designated shelters.

05 To evacuation center

06 Reception at evacuation center

07 Secure rearing environment for pets during evacuation

To evacuation center

Pet-friendly

Pets non-accepting

Evacuation center with pets

Pets at home, owner at evacuation center

Evacuate in a car/tent

Board out pets to friends/ facilities

To pet-friendly evacuation center

Examples of rearing environment in evacuation centers

*Obey the rules of your evacuation center.

Stay in the same room

Stay in the same room separately from non-owners

Stay in a separate room (pet-designated room)

Keep pets outside on the evacuation center's site

Search for pets

To evacuation center → Search

To evacuation center → Found → 07 Secure rearing environ-ment

To evacuation center → Search → Notify the local government if you cannot find your pets

< 2-5th day > → < After 1st week >

When a disaster strikes...
~Are you owner A or owner B?~

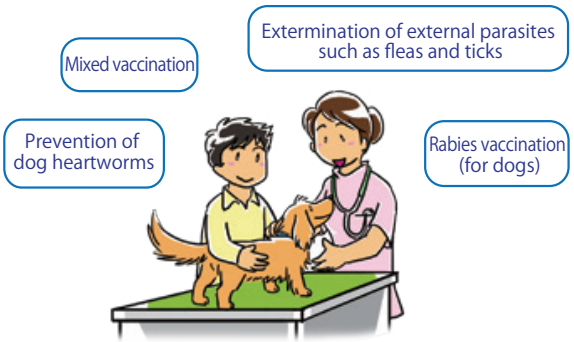
Preparing for disasters in advance makes a huge difference when you evacuate your home with your pets. Let's take a look at two different cases of pet owner A and owner B, both spending a week during a disaster.

Preparedness in everyday life

Pet training and health management

Owner A

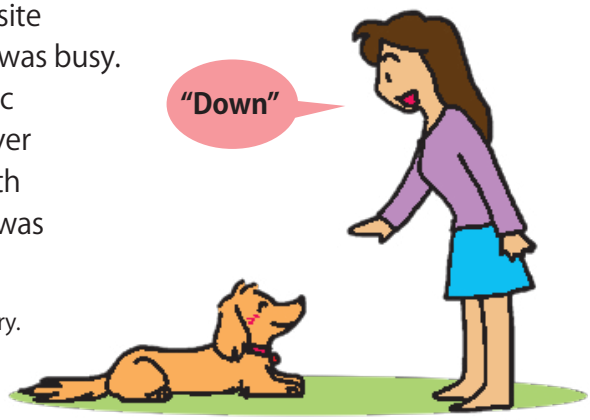
When owner A first started living with her pet, she got the animal vaccinated and got anti-parasite treatment. She also had trained her pet to obey very basic commands such as 'stay' and 'sit', while also familiarizing the pet with entering and staying in a carrier/cage as part of disaster preparations.



Owner B

When owner B first started living with her pet, she thought about vaccination and anti-parasite treatment, but kept postponing it as she was busy. She had trained her pet to obey very basic commands such as 'stay' and 'sit', but never trained the animal to get comfortable with carrier/cage because she did not think it was necessary.

* Annual rabies vaccination once a year is compulsory.

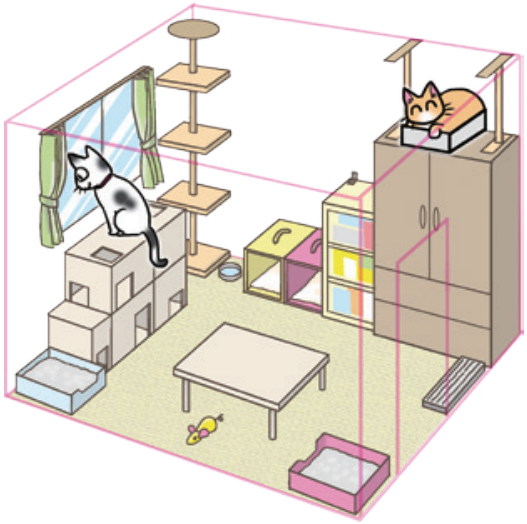


Prepare home and stockpiles for disasters

note

Make sure your pet ID clearly shows owner's contact info in case

Owner A was rearing her pet indoors, had prepared for disasters by securing furniture to the walls and applying anti-shatter film to the windows. She also had prepared an evacuation kit that contained emergency food for 5 days, along with an evacuation kit for her pet.



Owner B was rearing her pet indoors, had prepared for disasters by preparing an evacuation kit, but never prepared a pet evacuation kit nor confirmed location of evacuation shelter.

Occurrence of Disaster

Evacuation upon disaster (major earthquake)

note

Consider sheltering at home if safety of your home is confirmed.

Owner A

Although owner A's house got cracks in the wall due to the earthquake, no one in the family got injured since she had secured furniture and protected windows with film in advance. The pet was safe too, though frightened, because he escaped into the pet carrier.
Owner A decided to evacuate with her pet because there might be aftershocks.

Owner B

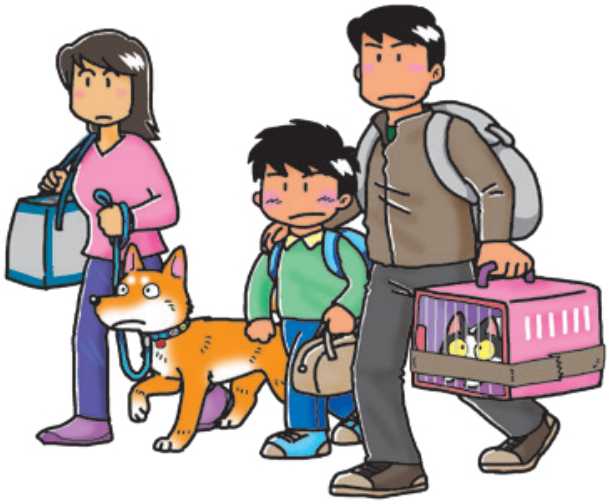
At owner B's house, bookshelves and a cupboard fell over and broken glass scattered on the floor, causing owner B to get lightly injured when moving around in the house. Her pet hid, being frightened by the quake and it took a long time for her to come out.
Owner B somehow rescued her pet and decided to evacuate together.

Evacuation with pets

note

Prepare yourself to evacuate with ALL of your pets.

With her evacuation kits (for humans and pet), evacuated with her pet to a shelter that accepted animals.
As she had confirmed the safe evacuation route referring to the hazard map in advance, she reached the shelter rather smoothly.



Evacuated to the nearest shelter with her evacuation kit.
As some roads were blocked by collapsed walls, she had to detour and it took a long time to reach the shelter.

Arriving at the shelter

note

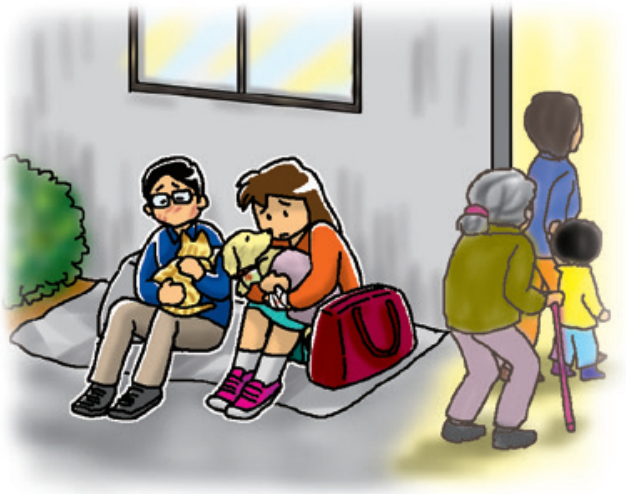
It is useful to put together necessary information of pets beforehand

Owner A

Owner A and her pet were smoothly accepted at the shelter because she chose a pet-friendly shelter and also because owner A had put together necessary information of her pet beforehand. Since her pet was comfortable with staying in a cage, there was no trouble with other human/animal evacuees.

Owner B

Although owner B somehow arrived at the shelter, it did not allow animals to stay inside. She had to spend a night outside of the shelter with her pet because she did not know which shelter accepts animals.



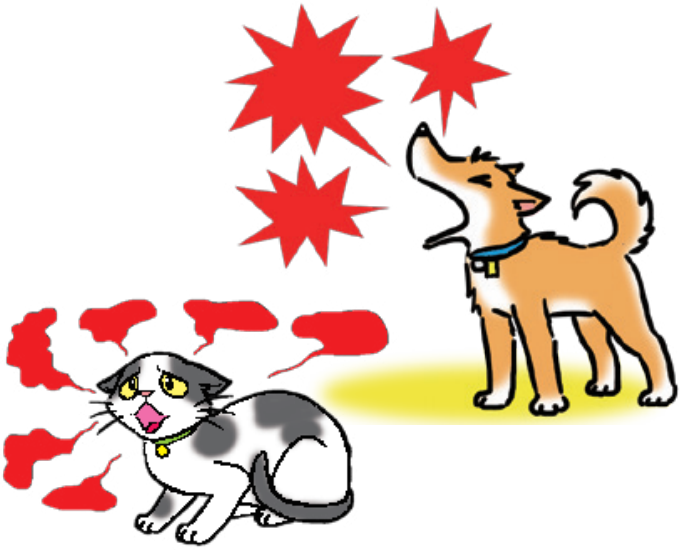
Life at the shelter

note

It can take up to 5 days or more until aid supplies arrive.
Until then, your pets' safety and wellbeing are solely up to you.

Owner A had included pet food for 5 days in her pet evacuation kit so she was able to feed her pet even at the shelter in a chaotic state, until when she received aid supplies for pets.
On day 2, according to the shelter policy, humans and animals were separated into different areas, but she was able to manage it also, as her pet had been trained properly in advance.

On the following day, she finally arrived at a shelter that accepted animals. However, as she had not prepared an evacuation kit for the pet, she had to share her food with her pet until the time aid supplies arrived.
As she did not have a cage, the pet became nervous and kept barking/meowing when owner B was not around, making owner B feel uncomfortable at the shelter.



Life at the shelter

note

You may need to board out your pet if evacuation prolongs. It is useful to make a list of people who can take care of your pets in such cases. Remember that some private makeshift housings do not allow pets.

Owner A

A week passed since the disaster and owner A decided to board out her pet at a pet shelter, considering condition of the animal. Owner A's pet was immediately accepted at the pet shelter, which required vaccination and parasite removal in advance, because the pet had been treated for both.
Hence, owner A was able to tidy up her home during daytime, and she could take care of her pet in the morning and evening.

Owner B

A week passed since the disaster and owner B decided to board out her pet at a pet shelter. However, since the pet shelter required vaccination and parasite removal in advance, it took some time for owner B's pet to be accepted because owner B had to search for a veterinary clinic to get treatment.

To sum it up...

Are you owner A or owner B?
Which one are you likely to be?

As illustrated here, disaster preparation and collecting information in advance would make a great difference in case of emergency.

What to prepare and how?

Make your plan referring to the
Disaster Preparedness Guideline for Humans and Pets
<For General Pet Owners>

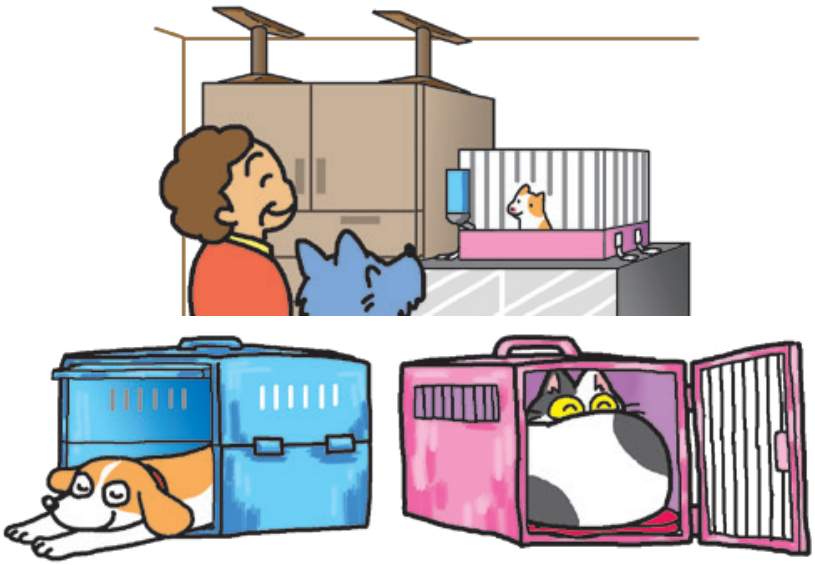
For General Pet Owners

Disaster Preparedness Guideline for Humans and Pets

Measures you can take during normal time

1 Measures to ensure safety of your home

- ☐ Secure furniture/pet cage to the walls/ceilings to prevent them from falling over
- ☐ If you rear your pets outdoors, ensure safety of the pet's house and its surrounding area (avoid area near external walls and windows)
- ☐ Secure places to hide (refuge) for your pets, such as cages and carriers



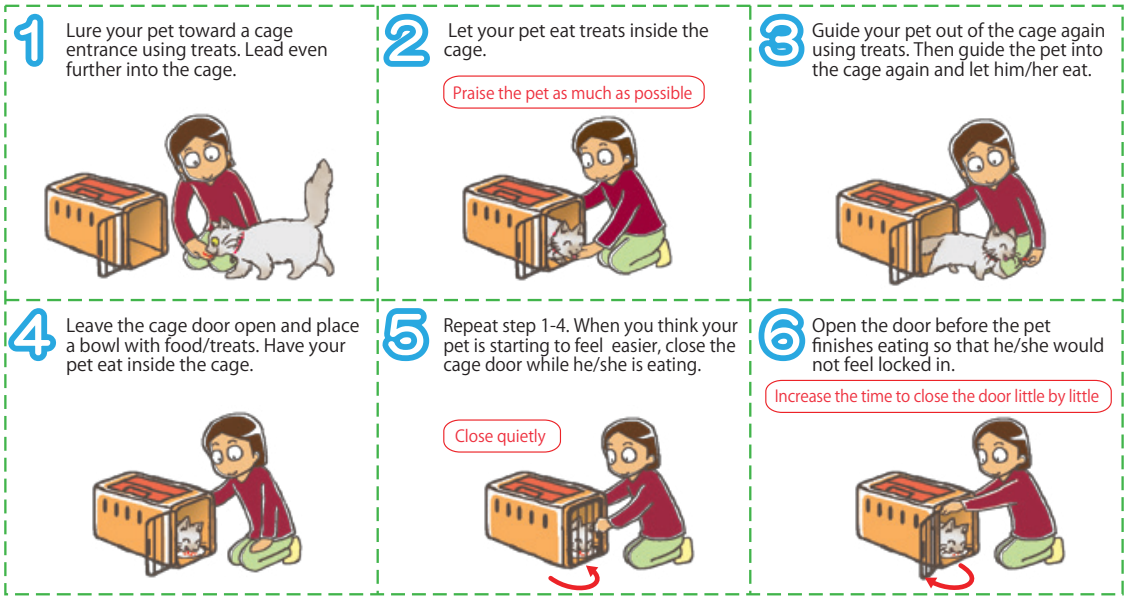
2 Pet training and health management

Train your dogs...

- ☐ To obey basic commands such as 'stay' , 'come' , 'sit' , 'down' etc.
- ☐ To enter and stay in cages/carriers so that they can get used to it
- ☐ Not to bark when it is not desirable
- ☐ Not to get frightened of or aggressive toward other humans/animals
- ☐ To excrete at a designated spot
- ☐ Vaccinate your dogs against rabies (compulsory) and other diseases
- ☐ Prevent and exterminate parasites such as dog heartworms, fleas and ticks
- ☐ Keep your dogs clean by shampooing and trimming
- ☐ Get your dogs neutered

Train your cats...

- ☐ To enter and stay in cages/carriers so that they can get used to it
- ☐ Not to get frightened of other humans/animals
- ☐ To excrete at a designated spot
- ☐ Vaccinate against diseases
- ☐ Exterminate parasites
- ☐ Get your cats neutered
- ☐ Keep your cats indoor whenever possible (outdoor cats often go missing in a time of disasters)



3 Measures to avoid your pets from missing

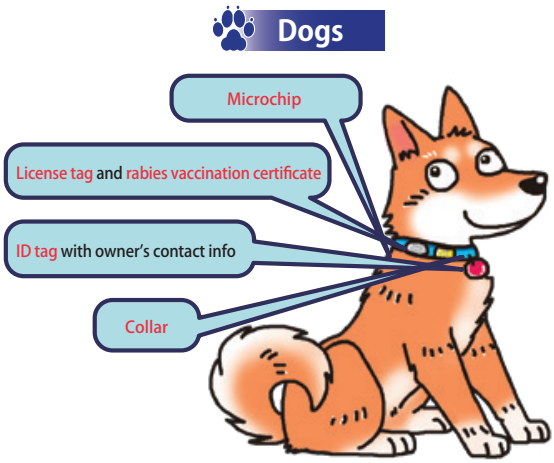
Use license tags, ID tags, microchips etc. to prove your ownership

Dogs:

☐ Collars and ID tags

☐ License tags, rabies vaccination certificate
(Under the Rabies Prevention Law, each dog owner is required to have their dogs vaccinated against rabies once a year and have proof of the vaccination attached to the dog)

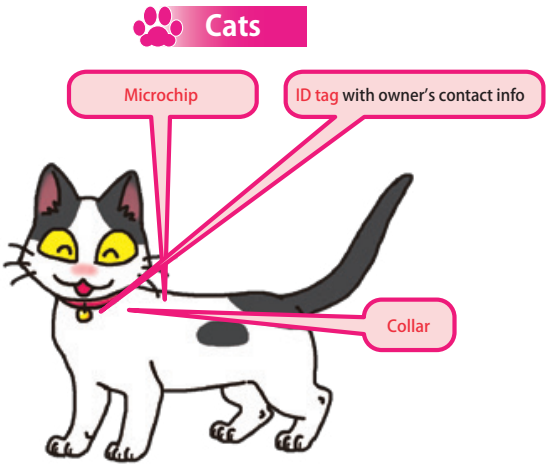
☐ Microchips
(Upon microchipping, each pet owners must register information of the owner and the pet at the Japan Veterinary Medical Association etc.)



Cats:

☐ Collars and ID tags
(some people recommend collars that break away easily when force is applied, but we strongly recommend that you microchip your cat if you choose to use this kind of collar)

☐ Microchips
(Upon microchipping, each pet owner must register information of the owner and the pet at the Japan Veterinary Medical Association etc.)

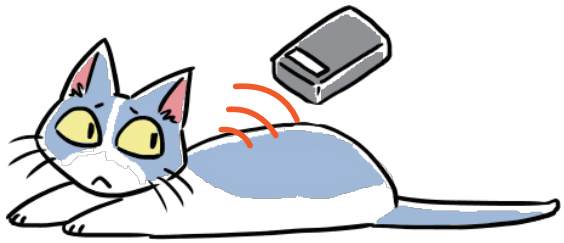


When lost pet with microchip is rescued...

Scan information on the chip
Local governments, Police, Veterinary clinic

→ **Contact** →

The pet and the owner get reunited!



4 Prepare an emergency kit and stockpile for pets

List of stockpile for pets, and order of priority

Priority 1 : Items to save life and wellbeing of your pets

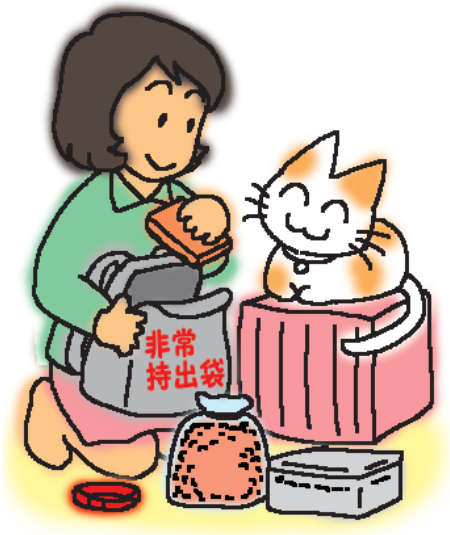
☐ Therapeutic food, medication
☐ Pet food and drinking water
(at least for 5 days, ideally for 7+ days)
☐ Carriers/cages
(indispensable for evacuation of cats and small animals)
☐ Extra collars and leashes (non-stretchable ones)
☐ Pet potty pads
☐ Tools to clean up pet waste
☐ Toilet items
(for cats, litter that your pet is used to, or a little amount of used litter)
☐ Pet food and water bowls

Priority 2 : Information

☐ Contact info of the pet owner and other people/facilities related to the pets
☐ Photos of the pets
(It is also helpful to keep the pictures in your mobile phone along with the printed material)
☐ Record of vaccination, previous disease, ongoing medication,
medical tests, health condition, contact info of veterinary clinic

Priority 3 : Other pet supplies

☐ Towels, brushes
☐ Pet wipes, cleansing cotton
(useful for many purposes such as cleaning eyes, ears, etc.)
☐ Plastic bags
(useful for many purposes such as cleaning pet waste)
☐ Pets' scent-marked items such as favorite toys
☐ Laundry net bags
(useful for outdoor medical treatment and sheltering cat)
☐ Gummed tape and permanent markers
(useful for mending cage/carrier, making cardboard pet house,
posting information of your pet and many other purposes)



5 Information gathering and evacuation drill

Points to be checked at evacuation drill

- ☐ Which are the most dangerous spots on your hazard map?
- ☐ Where are designated shelters that accept pets?
- ☐ How long does it take to get to the designated emergency shelter and which are the spots that can be hazardous with broken glass or fallen signboards etc.?
- ☐ Which detour route should you take if the planned route becomes blocked?
- ☐ How will your pets act at the shelter?
  (Pets can behave differently in an unfamiliar situation)
- ☐ How do you avoid causing a trouble to those who does not like animals at the shelter?
- ☐ What kind of living environment does the shelter provide for pets?
- ☐ Where is your secondary evacuation shelter, in case the designated shelter of your choice has been affected by disasters?
- ☐ Which secondary shelter will you go to if the first shelter of your choice has been affected by a certain kind of disaster (such as tsunami)?
- ☐ Who will you board out your pet to if no shelter can accept pets, indoors nor outdoors, for some reasons?

Disaster drill at Katahira Shimin Center (Sendai City)

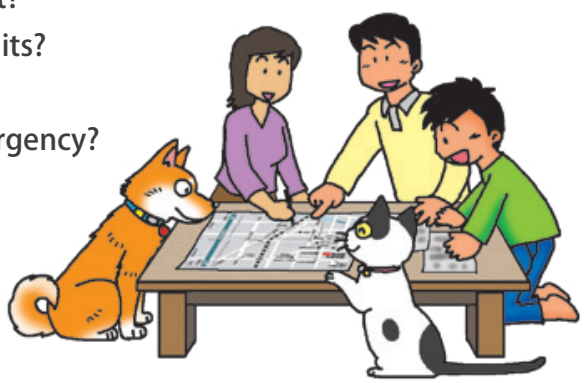
Pet owners brought their pets to the shelter

Model display of zoning for pet-owning evacuees

6 Cooperation among family members and neighbors

Discussion within the family and local community

☐ How will your family contact each other and where will you meet up?
☐ How will you evacuate your pets and who will do what?
☐ What will you do if nobody is at home when disaster hits? (What do you do if your pets are left alone at home?)
☐ Who will you board out your pet to in the case of emergency?
☐ Can you arrange donation of pet supplies or mutual pet-sitting among neighbors?



7 Boarding out your pet

☐ It is recommended to make a list of relatives/friends who can temporarily take care of your pet in order to secure places for your pets to stay other than designated evacuation shelters.

What pet owners should do at the time of disasters

1 Evacuation with pets

Examples of preparations for evacuation with pets

For dogs

☐ Put on the leash and verify if the collar is firmly attached and that the dog is wearing a name tag and rabies vaccination certificate.
☐ For small dogs, put on the leash and put them into a carrier or cage.
☐ Go to the designated emergency shelter with evacuation goods.

For cats

☐ Put them in a carrier or cage.
☐ Put gummed tape on the carrier's door to prevent cats from escaping.
☐ Go to the designated emergency shelter with evacuation goods.

2 Securing rearing environment for pets during evacuation

Rearing at evacuation center

☐ Obey the rules of each evacuation center and take care of your pets with responsibly.
☐ Help and cooperate with other pet owners to maintain the rearing environment.

Rearing at home

☐Get necessary relief goods and information at the designated shelter (make sure your home is safe).

Rearing in a car

☐ Get necessary relief goods and information at the designated shelter.
☐ When you leave your pets alone in the car, be careful of the temperature inside the car and leave enough drinking water.
☐ When you leave your car for a long time, move your pets to a safe place (make sure the car is safe and beware of the Economy Class Syndrome).

Boarding out pets to friends/facilities

☐ Consider boarding out your pets to your acquaintances who live in non-affected areas.
☐ When boarding out your pets to a facility, check the conditions, period and price, and conclude a contract to avoid trouble.

Conclusion

Pet owners must be always aware of duties that come with the right of keeping pets, make sufficient preparations for disasters and be always ready to fulfill the duties as a pet owner.

Reference

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「ペットも守ろう!防災対策」(Japanese version only)

http://www.env.go.jp/nature/dobutsu/aigo/2_data/pamph/h2909a.html

「Be Prepared!　Because you want to be with your pet always」

https://www.env.go.jp/nature/dobutsu/aigo/2_data/pamph/h2703.html

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Are You and Your Pets Safe in Case of Disaster?

Disaster Preparedness Guideline for Humans and Pets

<For General Pet Owners>

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