

IEMA: "Family preparedness plans must include pets"

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IEMA, local emergency management agencies to focus on pet preparedness throughout June

SPRINGFIELD – Pets are cherished family members in many Illinois homes, so it's important for pet owners to have plans to keep their pets safe during and after emergencies. Throughout National Pet Preparedness Month in June, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies will provide tips and information on pet emergency preparedness.

"More than half of homes in Illinois have at least one pet," said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. "Emergency situations can be very stressful, particularly for pets who don't understand what is happening. If your family includes a dog, cat, hamster or other furry, feathered or scaly friends, don't forget to include their unique needs in your home emergency plans."

Joseph said home emergency supply kits for people should include a three-day supply of such items as food, water, first aid kit, weather alert radio, flashlights, spare batteries and other items. Pet owners should also have a pet preparedness kit stocked with items such as:

- At least a three-day supply of food and water
- Extra supplies of pet medicines
- Copies of pet registration, vaccinations and other important documents
- Photo of your pet in case you are separated during an emergency
- Collar with ID tag, harness or leash
- Crate or other pet carrier in case of evacuation
- Pet litter and box, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach for sanitation
- Toys, treats or other familiar items to reduce your pet's stress during the emergency

A disaster may require you to evacuate your home, sometimes with little notice. It's important to take pets with you, as an evacuation could last several days, even weeks, and your pets likely cannot survive without care. Plan now for places you and your pets can stay following an evacuation, as many public shelters do not allow animals inside.

It's also important to have a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for or evacuate your animals yourself. Talk to neighbors, friends and family to make sure someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.

Additional pet preparedness and general emergency preparedness information is available on the Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov, the Ready Illinois Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ReadyIllinois and on Twitter at [Twitter.com/ReadyIllinois](https://twitter.com/ReadyIllinois).