

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Pet safety in emergencies

November 2025

Fire, flood and other emergencies can affect you, your property and your animals at any time. Impacts can limit access to your property, compromise utilities such as water and electricity, or leave you isolated or requiring evacuation.

Safety of your animals is your responsibility. Being prepared for emergencies is crucial to a positive outcome for you and your pets.

Are you at risk?

If your property is at risk from bushfires and/or floods you should develop specific plans of action in advance to keep you and your pets safe.

Emergency planning information is available from your local NSW RFS brigade, NSW SES unit or council. Neighbours and regional historical records may also help determining if your property is at risk.

Natural disasters, especially severe storms can occur anywhere and with little warning. Everyone should be prepared.

Preparing for the worst

All household emergency plans should include your pets. In an emergency this will reduce stress, allow clearer thinking and reduce the danger to you, your family or emergency personnel trying to rescue them. Questions to consider include:

- Are you self-sufficient for at least 3 days?
- Do you have an emergency kit (e.g. leads, medicines, photos) for your pets?
- Are they identifiable (e.g. collar tag, cage label, microchip, registered)?
- Can you relocate your pets quickly? What safe transport options and routes do you have (including backup options)?
- Do you have a safe and secure place to house them in preparation to leave?
- Do you have a safe place in your home or on your property if you cannot relocate them?
- Do you have somewhere else to go that is out of danger e.g. at family or friends?
- Can a neighbour or friend enact your plan when you are not home?

Practice your plan to test it works and all family members know it.

Act early

Whether you have decided to stay or go put your plan into action early to protect your pets. This will give you time to deal with unforeseen problems. Do not wait for emergency warnings – they may come too late.

Animals may behave differently in an emergency as they can pick up on your stress levels, and may panic and run. Removing them early will minimise this issue.

If you are required to evacuate, take your pets with you. When you have no other alternative, bring your pets to an established evacuation centre for assistance with accommodation and other services. They should be contained (e.g. cage or lead) and bring your emergency kit and any medicines.

After a natural disaster emergency

Be mindful of any hazards that could impact your pets. If they have been relocated, do not bring them home until the area is safe.

If your pets are missing contact your local animal welfare/rescue groups, veterinary practice or council.

Use experiences gained from implementing or testing your plan to continually improve it.

More information

NSW Department of Primary Industries – [Community information for floods and bush fires](#)

NSW RFS www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

NSW SES www.ses.nsw.gov.au

World Animal Protection – [Protect your pet in a disaster](#) (disaster packs for different pet types)

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