

Preparing You & Your Pets



You and your pet Preparing for disaster

The safety of your family and pets depends on preparing a family disaster plan. In an emergency, if it is unsafe for you to stay in your home, it is unsafe for your pets to stay. If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately. Never wait until the last minute. Public sheltering should be your last resort. Sarasota County has four pet-friendly public shelters that accept only cats and dogs with current vaccination records.

Pet-friendly shelters can . . .

- ❑ Provide you and your pet(s) a safer refuge in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Keep you informed as to the state of emergency.
- ❑ Shelter your pet in a clean, safe area away from the general human population.

Pet-friendly shelters cannot . . .

- ❑ Allow owners to be continually with their animals.
- ❑ Board or kennel an animal without an owner or representative present at the shelter.
- ❑ Provide care or veterinary services to pet(s).
- ❑ Allow owners, once admitted, to leave the shelter without their animals or during sustained winds of 45 mph or higher.
- ❑ Transport people or animals to or from the shelter.
- ❑ Give prescribed medication to pet(s).
- ❑ Provide the required needed supplies.



Pet survival kit

- ❑ Collar with tag(s) and a sturdy leash
- ❑ ID tags, rabies tag, microchip ID and company contact information
- ❑ Any pet medications necessary or first-aid supplies (stored in watertight containers)
- ❑ Medical records and current vaccination information
- ❑ Current (less than a year old) photograph of each pet (with the owner)
- ❑ Secure carrier or collapsible cage for large dogs (not cardboard) for each pet, and bedding. Carriers should be large enough for the animals to stand comfortably and turn around and house a litter box if appropriate. Let your pets become familiar with their carriers ahead of time so they will feel secure and comfortable in case they have to live in them for days – or even weeks – after the storm.
- ❑ Food (at least a 2-week supply), stored in watertight containers in a cool, dry and dark place.
- ❑ Water (at least a 2-week supply)
- ❑ A manual can opener (if you use cans)
- ❑ Food and water bowls
- ❑ Plastic bags for treats, important papers, toys and miscellaneous
- ❑ Cat litter, liners and a pan
- ❑ Plastic trash bags to handle waste
- ❑ Newspaper and paper towels, disinfectant for clean ups
- ❑ Toys and any special comfort items that can fit in the crate with the animal
- ❑ Muzzle, if necessary. Use extra precaution handling your pet. In a disaster situation, animals may not act normally.
- ❑ Put proper ID on all your pet's belongings
- ❑ Out of area contact name and phone number

Pet shelter rules for pet owners

Evacuate to a pet-friendly designated shelter only after it is announced that the shelter is open.

- ❑ Sign a release upon arrival at the shelter.
- ❑ Provide a crate large enough to house your pet and water/food/litter (if feline).
- ❑ Present photo identification of yourself, pets and family members.
- ❑ Present current pet medical records when requested.
- ❑ Leash pets at all times when outside of their carriers.
- ❑ Feed and exercise your pet twice daily.
- ❑ Dispose of waste immediately.
- ❑ Latch and secure cage doors.
- ❑ Pets must be disease and parasite-free and must be well-behaved.
- ❑ Animals abandoned in the shelter will be relocated to Sarasota County Animal Services (SCAS) for disposition at their discretion.
- ❑ Owners are liable for damages or injury caused by their pets to any property, person or other animal.
- ❑ People are not permitted to reside in "pet-designated" areas. There are separate "living areas" for pets and people.
- ❑ Cats and dogs are the only non-human species allowed at pet-friendly shelters.
- ❑ Sarasota County reserves the right to refuse admittance to any animal that poses a risk to other animals or people.

If you stay at home

It is important to adequately plan for your pets even if you do not have to evacuate your home during a disaster. Carriers, collars with proper identification and leashes should be maintained for your pets at all times. Frightened animals may not act normally; approach and handle pets with caution.

Your pets will be most comfortable and secure in their carriers in a safe area of your home until the storm has passed. If they are not secured during the storm and your house is damaged, your pets may escape and become disoriented. If your pets become lost, proper identification will help to ensure their return to you.

Remember – if you bring plants indoors before a storm, keep pets away from them. Many plants are poisonous.

Know your zone

Learn the zone you are in and obtain evacuation information and preparation guidelines at scgov.net or by calling the Sarasota County Emergency Management Office at 941.861.5000. Then create your plan.



Where to go

- ❑ Arrange to stay with family or friends who live in a safe location and in a protected building.
- ❑ An alternative may be pet-friendly hotels. Call ahead for reservations or restrictions.
- ❑ If you cannot find a safe refuge for you and your pets together, arrange shelter for the animals at a veterinarian's office or boarding kennel. Any facility you choose to house your pets should be operated by knowledgeable and capable staff, located in an appropriate evacuation zone, not in a storm surge zone and of sturdy construction with hurricane shutters or appropriate wind-resistance protection.
- ❑ If you have an exotic pet, contact local pet stores or zoological gardens located in a safe area for assistance in sheltering your pet. Be prepared to supply appropriate housing (not glass) for the pet, and other supplies necessary to sustain the pet for at least two weeks.