

Hurricane Evacuation / Shelter In-Place Recommendations

1. Do not wait! Early evacuation is essential to life safety (for human and animal). Have a plan for at least one to two weeks! Do not risk the lives of emergency responders by staying behind and not evacuating in time leaving the responsibility on them to rescue you and your animals if possible. Your animals are YOUR responsibility, not anyone else's!
2. Evacuation priority: humans first, animals second, life sustaining items (animal feed/hay, medications, halters/leads/leashes, first aid supplies, medical records and documents, etc.) third, personal documents (identification, bank account info, checkbook, credit cards, medical records, birth certificates, stocks, etc.) fourth, irreplaceable / sentimental personal items fifth... PRIORITIZE and BE SMART and PRACTICAL!
3. Do not haul more weight (animals, cargo, etc.) than your trailer is rated to carry, or your vehicle is rate to tow safely. Example: Do not jeopardize your horse's life by trying to haul 4 horses in a trailer that was constructed and is rated to safely only haul 3 – Just because your friend has a 3-horse steel bumper pull trailer, doesn't mean you should tow the trailer with the horses inside with your Ford Ranger with a bumper hitch.
4. Prioritize your animals if you have to make more than one trip to evacuate them all. If sounds callous, however it is the reality. If you have to make more than one trip to evacuate the animals safely (without overloading the trailer or towing vehicle) you should consider prioritizing your animals and each time you have to leave with one load, consider the chance that you may not be able to return to evacuate additional loads. You can prioritize animals based on monetary value, sentimental value, age, sex, discipline/use, behavior (will load and haul easily without issue versus takes time to load), and various other values.
5. Consider and accept the fact that if you are relying on others to evacuate or assist you with evacuation of your animals, it will more than likely NOT be a training opportunity as this is likely an EMERGENCY evacuation. During an emergency evacuation where it is unknown if multiple trips can be made to evacuate humans and animals, most transporters will not spend longer than a few minutes attempting to lead/load animals that have not been trained or conditioned to load. It is a waste of time for a transporter to spend 30 minutes trying to load (train) one horse when that person could have loaded 10 horses during that time frame.
6. When you evacuate, take enough supplies for your animals for at least 1 week (preferably 2). Supplies include feed/hay (if you cannot bring feed then at least bring a surplus of hay for equines and livestock as they can survive and better digest forage under stressful conditions), water (for a couple days from the facility the animals were evacuated from as some animals will not drink if the water smells or taste different so the water is used to transition to a different water source), medications (especially prescription medications), medical supplies (first aid, emergency medications, etc.), protective gear (blankets, leg wraps, fly masks, etc.), buckets, etc.
7. Make sure you have proof of ownership for all animals! Coggins with a photo or detailed description and your name, registration paperwork with a detailed description or photo and your name, veterinary records, embedded microchip information, etc. Most facilities will require proof of ownership prior to reclaiming your animals.
8. Make sure you have contact information for the veterinarians in the area where your animals will be evacuated to in case of emergency.
9. Fuel up all of your vehicles and fuel containers.
10. Fill up any available containers with water for the animals.

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11. Have all animals microchipped and register the microchip with the company so that you can be contacted if your animal is found. Microchips are not useful if the company doesn't have any owner information in their registry. If you do not have your animals microchipped, then apply an identifier on them. Identifiers can be a military dog tag braided in mane, a hospital wristband around a fetlock, a broodmare neck band, livestock marker on abdomen, etc. It is recommended to use at least two types of identifiers in the event that one fails or washes off, etc. There are a lot of creative and practical forms of emergency identifiers for animals.
12. Leave a halter on, only if it is a breakaway type or has a weak link (cable tie, baling twine, etc.) as a connecting attachment. This will allow for the animal to be more easily caught and restrained if found loose but will (hopefully) break free if the animal becomes entangled or entrapped and panics. It is not recommended to use a halter without a weak link as if the animal becomes entrapped by the halter it could result in catastrophic injury or death. **DO NOT LEAVE A LEAD ROPE ATTACHED...NOT EVEN A SHORT CATCH ROPE**, the odds are greater that the rope will get caught in something than the halter. If the animal is trained to lead calmly and give to pressure, the animals should be able to be relocated without the weak link breaking.
13. Leave a fly mask on to protect the equine's eyes from flying debris (dirt, pine needles, foliage, etc.). It is not a guarantee that the equine will not suffer from an eye injury, but a method of added protection and prevention. Eye injuries are serious and can be life threatening based on treatment cost and recovery time, etc.
14. Leg protection can be used to protect the fragile anatomy of the lower legs. **HOWEVER**, only wraps or boots that the equine can run, turn, back, and jump in should be used...**SHIPPING BOOTS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED** as they can inhibit movement. If "wraps" are used, the tail that is used to secure the wrap (typically Velcro) should be secured with a second method such as vet wrap, heavy duty tape (Duct), cable tie (tight enough to just hold the wrap tail secure but not tight enough to constrict), etc. If a wrapped bandage (polo, standing, etc.) becomes unwrapped it could become caught in debris while the other part is still attached to leg or the animal could step on the unraveled tail while trying to flee.
15. **DO NOT TIE YOUR ANIMALS TO ANYTHING AND DO NOT SET THEM FREE!** Make sure all animals are free to move and flee short distances but remain in a confinement. Animals (not matter the species) can pose a threat and health risk to the public and emergency responders, they can cause motor vehicle collision, traumatic injuries, and property damage. Your "domesticated, overly friendly, highly trained, well bred, calm natured" animal will not be the same animal if it is fighting or fleeing for its own survival and is no longer in a familiar environment.
16. **DO NOT SEDATE YOUR EQUINE!** If you have a fractious equine, it is recommended not to sedate the equine because by sedating it you are decreasing its ability to flee safely, react quickly and purposefully, and not further injure itself by panicking without having all of its survival senses operating at 100%. It is understood that sedation is temporary, however it only takes a second for something unexpected to happen.