



Comforting Animals

Read. Print. Put with your disaster papers.

Disasters are scary for animals. Anything you can do to make them feel safe will make it easier on them. Below are some suggestions.

Reduce Stress

Animals can pick up on your stress. When they sense something is going on, their instinct is to hide or run. That is why confining your animals in a room, barn or pasture with a closed door or gate when you learn of a disaster should be done right away. To be safe, put a sign on the outside of the door or gate that says, "Animals inside. Open with care". When it comes time for you to leave your home the animals will then be somewhere you can find them.

Transport Cage

If an animal is not used to going into a cage, start getting them used to it. Put their transport cage in an area where they normally are and leave the door open. Switch off putting their food or treats in the cage. You want them to start feeling comfortable going in the cage so it will not be as stressful when you evacuate.

Riding in a Car or Trailer

If an animal is not used to going for a ride in the car or in a trailer, put them in a crate or load them in a trailer, and take them for short rides. When you have to evacuate, they will then feel more comfortable in the car or trailer.

If a large animal has never been in a trailer, it's important to start practicing loading them. Trying to convince an animal to go into a trailer for the first time during a disaster is going to be stressful on them and you.

Temporary Housing

Wherever you end up staying while evacuated it is going to be a new and probably scary experience for your animals. Try and find a secure location to keep them that will prevent them from escaping. This could be a closed room, a securely fenced in yard for dogs or a high enough pen or corral they cannot get out of.

Choose a Quiet Location

Reducing the noise and commotion will help an animal to start relaxing. If they are not used to being around a lot of people, keep them away from where people are gathered. If you know they don't like men or children for example, again, keep them away from those who can cause them added stress.

Eating and Drinking

For the first couple of days after you have been evacuated, your animals may not show a lot of interest in eating. Continue to offer them food, preferably giving them what they are used to eating and around the same time of day they normally are fed. Do not give them people food as an alternative to their own food. Like people, their stomachs can be upset from the changes they are experiencing and eating food they are not used to can cause diarrhea.

Make sure to have plenty of fresh water available all the time. It is more important during the first few days that they are drinking plenty of water, especially if it is hot.

Spending Time With Them

Make time each day to focus your attention on your animals. Having you close by will be reassuring for them, and it will no doubt provide you with the comfort you need also. If you have to leave them for a period of time during the day, leave them a piece of your clothing you have worn. Your scent on the material will give them some comfort.

Helping an Animal Calm Down

If, after a couple days your animal is still stressed and not showing any signs of improving, there are over-the-counter tablets you can get that help an animal calm down. Do not give your animals any human medicine that might calm them down. If you are really concerned contact a veterinarian to get their recommendation.