

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preparing Pets for Severe Weather Conditions

NAPPS Offers Tips to Help Pet Parents Prepare for Harsh Weather Conditions

MT. LAUREL, NJ, July 2, 2013 – If faced with sudden disaster, would you be prepared to help your entire family – including pets – avert dangerous situations? The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS), a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals, is raising awareness about the importance of comprehensive plans and emergency preparedness to ensure the safety of pets during natural disasters.

“Never underestimate the power of preparation. The key to increasing the likelihood of safety is to be prepared and remain calm,” said Sherry L. Suhosky, president of NAPPS. “Establishing a safety plan for weather emergencies will help reduce panic when the storm hits. An animal will feel more comfortable and safe if their pet parent is displaying calm behavior.”

The NAPPS Emergency Planning Committee has created an emergency planning guide that includes specific recommendations for monitoring and coping with tornadoes, thunderstorms, hurricanes, floods, winter storms, extreme heat, wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes. The manual is available for free download by visiting www.petsitters.org.

If there is a thunderstorm watch in your area, take the necessary measures to protect yourself and your pets. Severe thunderstorm conditions may include heavy rain, lightning or damaging winds close to 60mph, and hail reaching a diameter of 0.75 inches.

For pet parents in high or moderate risk areas of tornados, hurricanes and other harmful storms, NAPPS offers these tips to increase safety:

- Identify a group of volunteer spotters who watch the sky during threatening weather and report signs to local emergency management officials, the regional office of the National Weather Service and local farmers. Utilize websites like the Incident Information System (<http://www.inciweb.org/>) to track the spread of wildfires and storms and stay up-to-date on areas that are at risk.
- Designate a safe area in or near your home to shelter your family and animals in a severe thunderstorm. Teach family members what to do in a storm if they are at home, outside or in a car, including how to relocate animals to safe locations.
- Familiarize yourself with city, county and state emergency plans.
- If a storm is coming, crate your pets before they are able to sense danger. This will help to prevent them from retreating to challenging hiding places.

- Attach alert stickers to your windows and doors to show rescue workers that there are pets in the home. The ASPCA offers free stickers: <http://tinyurl.com/2dz2y8f>
- Make sure all pets have up-to-date identification at all times.
- Plan (and practice) several evacuation routes with your pets in case a route is blocked. If you have horses or livestock, make arrangements ahead of time for a temporary shelter, such as parks, animal shelters, rodeos, fairgrounds, or family and friends' homes may be options available to you. Pack portable fencing for a temporary corral.
- If possible, keep a large animal trailer hitched at all times to a dedicated vehicle with a full gas tank for a smooth and quick evacuation with horses and livestock.
- For pet parents with horses and livestock living in areas that are prone to wild fires, use spray paint to paint your phone number on the animal as large as possible, so it can be easily seen at a distance if you must turn your horses out. Be sure to remove halters from horses, as they will burn into the flesh causing severe injury or death. After releasing horses, close and secure all corrals and stalls to prevent animals from returning to their corrals.
- At all times, it is important to have an emergency supply kit for your pet, including a pet identification form with photos, a microchip number, shot records, food, water, veterinarian and emergency contact information (including one contact outside of the emergency area,) first aid supplies, and a three-week supply of medications. Keep the emergency kit in a sealed, waterproof bag or container.

Given the importance of pet identification, NAPPS reminds pet parents and sitters that the most important thing one can do for a pet is purchase simple identification tags; however, since even the best collars can slip off, NAPPS recommends using a microchip or visiting Pet Hub for a digital ID tag. Through Pet Hub, animals can wear ID tags right on their collars that can be scanned with a smart phone, giving important information about the pet, along with pet parent contact information, should the animal become lost.

For additional safety tips visit www.petsitters.org.

About NAPPS: NAPPS is the only national non-profit trade association dedicated to serving the needs of professional pet sitters. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, serving as “the most respected authority in professional pet sitting.” It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS’ free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, and a nationwide referral service,. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS’ nationwide “Pet Sitter Locator” at www.petsitters.org. For more information on NAPPS,

please follow [@TheNAPPS](https://twitter.com/TheNAPPS) on Twitter or join us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.

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