Disaster Preparedness for Your Rabbit

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Introduction

- Forward-looking plans are needed to evacuate rabbits quickly and safely
- Early detection is key
  - NOAA Weather Radio
  - FEMA App
- Be prepared!
Disaster Plan

- Identify Scenarios
- Recruit Alternate Caregivers
- Create Evacuation Kit
- Plan Evacuation Route
- Practice
Identify Disaster Scenarios

- Immediate Evacuation
  - Fire, earthquake, gas leak

- Shelter in Place
  - Severe thunderstorm, tornado, blizzard, lose electricity

- Evacuate
  - Flooding, wildfire, hurricane, cyclone, volcanic eruption, chemical spill

- Owner Illness or Death
Recruit Alternate Caregivers

• Identify individual(s) to provide care for your rabbits – all stages of life and illness
• Buddy up – offer to be a contact for your friends
• Help first responders – document your alternate caregivers in a wallet ID card
Create An Evacuation Kit (aka Go Bag)

- One carrier per rabbit or group of rabbits
  - Close to animal
  - Labeled with owner name and rabbit information
- Portable living space, litterbox, litter, food and water crocks - separate from primary living space
- Minimum one week of pelleted food and hay per rabbit
- One week of water per rabbit
- Care instructions
Create An Evacuation Kit (aka Go Bag)

- Medication and medical records (waterproof bag)
- First aid kit
  - Gauze, vet wrap, SSD, scissors, nail trimmers, syringes critical care
  - Depending upon care acuity required – IV fluids, GI motility drugs
- Toys and treats for comfort
- Create a checklist 😊
Disaster: Shelter in Place

- Identify safe zone(s) – no windows, flying debris
- Choose easy to clean areas
- Fresh water
  - Fill sinks and bath tubs
  - Fill empty containers
- Emergency supplies and plan
Emergency Supplies and Plan

- Frozen water bottles to use as evaporative coolers
- Flashlights, batteries
- Battery operated fans (clip to living space)
- Candles
- Hand Sanitizer
- Cash, ATMs could be down
- For areas prone to disasters, buy a generator before the disaster and know how to use it
Disaster: Plan Evacuation Route

- In advance, acquaint yourself with possible services in your area
  - Not all shelters allow pets
  - Friends, volunteers (aka buddies), relatives, boarding facilities, veterinarians
- Identify travel route(s) and hotels that allow pets
- Create a list of resources with phone numbers
Disaster: Plan Evacuation Route

- What if you are not at home?!?
  - Arrange for a trusted neighbor to gather your rabbits and meet you at a pre-designated place

- Don’t wait for mandatory evacuation orders!
Car Travel Safety: Options for Safest Animal Carrier Position

- **Safest:**
  - Backseat behind passenger drivers side seat (aka floor carrier)

- **Next safest:**
  - Backseat on top of floor carrier

- **Less safe:**
  - Passenger back set

- **Least safe:**
  - Passenger front seat

- Applying seatbelt to carrier/strap can create shear forces which jettison animals 😞
Assist First Responders

- Place evacuation stickers at all major entrances
- List all species
- In case you are not home: include veterinary clinic information
- If you have already evacuated, write EVACUATED on the stickers
Time-Critical Evacuation Considerations

- Get creative, carriers might not be accessible
- Use an evacsac
- Use a pillowcase
Owner Illness or Death

• Make plans while you are healthy
• For acute situations, choose someone close to your home
• Inform family and friends of your wishes
• If state law allows, create an animal trust
Practice Evacuations

- Be certain your rabbit is accustomed to being picked up and handled
- Never try to catch a rabbit on the move!
- Builds confidence
- Reduces stress
- Ensures rabbits are calm when placed into carriers
Are you a Rescue Group?
Help to Spread the News Continually!

- March: Spring Safety Awareness
- May: Wildfire Safety Awareness
- June: Pet Safety, Summer Safety Awareness
- September: National Preparedness Month
- October: Fire Prevention Awareness
- December: Winter Safety Awareness
Conclusion

- Any disaster is extremely stressful to human family members, and animal family members
- Having a well documented and practiced disaster preparedness plan is the key to success to evacuate ALL family members
Resources

- Disaster Preparedness (Patricia Brant and June Booth): [https://rabbit.org/disaster-preparedness-for-your-rabbit-dont-think-it-wont-happen-to-you/](https://rabbit.org/disaster-preparedness-for-your-rabbit-dont-think-it-wont-happen-to-you/)
- [www.ready.gov/](http://www.ready.gov/)
- Ease into disaster preparedness: [http://do1thing.com/individuals](http://do1thing.com/individuals)
- Disaster Preparedness Kit: [m.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/pet_disaster_preparedness_kit.html](http://m.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/pet_disaster_preparedness_kit.html)
Resources

- Pet Friendly Hotels: www.cdc.gov/features/petsanddisasters/index.html
- Wallet ID Card: docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b88735_46b67cf279c2429dadd87b61efe69491.pdf
- Evacsacs: www.evacpet.com