

STEP #4: KNOW WHAT TO DO

PETS AND DISASTERS

Disasters can be extremely difficult for animals to cope with both on a physical and emotional level. Depending on the event and what your pet has experienced, you may witness signs of anxiety, fear, confusion, or aggression.

How to Help Your Pet Cope

- Be aware that if your property has been damaged, there could be sharp materials, electrical wires or other hazards in and around your home. Inspect your property carefully before allowing your pet to enter.
- Don't let your pet go outside unattended.
 - Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, causing pets to become confused and lost.
 - Dogs should be leashed and outdoor cats kept indoors for a few days after a disaster.
- In many instances, animals may stop eating as a result of high levels of stress. If your pet has not eaten in a while, reintroduce food in small portions and gradually work up to regular portions. Give bland food to start as it will be easier on the stomach.
- Set aside a quiet place for your pet and fill it with their favourite bedding and toys. This will provide a sense of safety and security. Items that contain their scent will help to calm nerves and provide them with a sense that life is returning to normal.
 - If your pet is suffering from severe anxiety, consult your veterinarian.
- Be patient with your pet. Animals can't understand what has happened the way people can. They will be confused and in need of comfort.
 - Take the time to comfort your pet using physical reassurance that they enjoy (gentle petting, massage, scratching behind the ears, etc.) and verbal reassurance (soft, soothing voice).
- Try to get your pet back into their normal routine as soon as possible.
- Similar to children and adults, disaster-related stress may change a pet's behavior. Normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive.

- Watch your animals closely, and be cautious around other animals – even pets you know.
- If you are concerned about your pet's behaviour, contact your veterinarian.

Remember: You are responsible for your pet at all times, even during and after emergencies!