

Disaster Preparedness for Horse Owners



Before

- ◆ **Plan Ahead.** Determine the best place for animal confinement in case of a disaster. Find alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps are not working or have a hand pump installed. You should have a minimum of three days feed and water on hand.
- ◆ **Evacuation.** Decide where to take your horses if evacuation is necessary. Contact fairgrounds, equestrian center, and private farms/stables about their policies and ability to take horses temporarily in an emergency. Have several sites in mind. Familiarize yourself with several evacuation routes to your destination.
- ◆ **Identification.** Photograph, identify, and inventory your horses. Permanent identification such as tattoos, brands, etched hooves or microchips are best. Temporary identification, such as tags on halters, neck brands, and duct tape with permanent writing will also work. Include your name and phone number. Keep identification information with you to verify ownership. (Breed registration papers may already have this information.)
- ◆ **Medical records and vaccinations.** Your horses need to have current vaccinations. Keep medical histories and record special dosing instructions, allergies, and dietary requirements. Write down contact information for your veterinarian.
- ◆ **Vehicles.** Keep trailers and vans well-maintained, full of gas, and ready to move at all times. Be sure your animals will load. If you don't have your own vehicles, make arrangements with local companies or neighbors before disaster strikes.

During

- ◆ Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on the television or radio.
- ◆ Evacuate your horses early, if possible, to ensure their safety and ease your stress
- ◆ Take all vaccinations and medical records, the Emergency disaster kit, and enough hay and water for three days.
- ◆ Call your destination to make sure the site is still available.
- ◆ Use roads not in use for human evacuation when you transport your horses to the sheltering site.
- ◆ If you must leave your animals, leave them in a preselected area appropriate for disaster type. Leave enough hay for 48 to 72 hours. Do not rely on automatic watering systems. Power may be lost.

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After

- ◆ Check fences to be sure they are intact. Check pastures and fences for sharp objects that could injure horses. Be aware of downed power lines, fallen trees, and debris. Familiar scents and landmarks may have changes, and animals can easily become confused and lost.
- ◆ If you find someone else's animal, isolate it from your animals until it is returned to its owner or can be examined by a veterinarian. Always use caution when approaching and handling strange or frightened horses.
- ◆ If you've lost an animal, contact your veterinarians, humane societies, stables, surrounding farms, and other facilities. Listen to the EAS for groups that may be accepting lost animals.
- ◆ Check with your veterinarian for information about possible disease outbreaks.

Disaster Preparedness Kit

- Your veterinarian's information
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Plastic trash barrel with a lid
- Water buckets
- Feed for 3 days (minimum)
- Non-nylon leads, halters, and shanks
- Leg wraps
- Horse blanket or sheet
- First Aid items
- Tarps
- Portable generators
- Flashlights
- Shovel
- Lime or bleach
- Fly spray
- Wire cutters
- Sharp knife
- Hoof pick
- A current photograph of horse(s)

This emergency information was developed by the State of California, Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health & Food Safety Services, Animal Health Branch, Animal Care program, 1220 N St., Sacramento, CA 95814 and distributed by the California Veterinary Medical Association, 5231 Madison Ave., Sacramento, CA 95841.