



**To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors**

**For Immediate Release: Contact Anne Fitzgerald**  
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## **The season of hurricanes and tropical storms is well underway DAR urges Delawareans to include companion animals and pets in emergency plans**

We've been lucky so far this hurricane season, but hurricane Irene is looming in the Atlantic and potentially poised to find its way up the Atlantic Coast. Now is the perfect time to take stock of emergency plans to ensure the safety of yourself, your family, and your animals. Elainea Goldthwaite, Delaware Animal Response (DAR) coordinator says, "With possible evacuations or long term power outages extra steps need to be taken to ensure our pets and companion animals are taken care of. While a disaster kit for the family may already be set aside, people need to have one for their pets and plans for other animals as well."

Depending upon the severity of a storm and other mitigating conditions, animal owners may shelter in place or may evacuate. In Delaware, one no longer has to make that decision about companion animals and pets. If an evacuation is ordered people are urged to not leave pets to fend for themselves. Delaware has plans in place that provide for pets if a human shelter is opened. Depending on the current conditions pets may be sheltered at the same location or in close proximity to the human shelter.

In most cases people will be able to shelter in place at home instead of evacuating and must be sure they have enough food, drinking water, and supplies for both their animals and themselves. This supply should be enough to last 7 days.

### **DAR recommendations for pets before emergency or disaster strikes;**

In the past, if an evacuation was recommended, people had to go to a "traditional" human shelter and could not bring their pets. Many people chose to remain at home with their pets rather than abandon them. Human and animal lives were lost as a consequence. Delaware, through DAR, has changed this by accepting the "Community" Shelter approach, i.e., co-locating human and pet shelters:

- If an evacuation is ordered, provisions for pets will be made.
- Pet shelters will be sheltered in close proximity to human shelters
  - Owners will be encouraged to visit regularly and even assist in the day to day care of their pets
  - Pets and owners will be less stressed, healthier and happier
  - Owners will see that their pets are safe
  - More people will evacuate and not stay behind in emergencies, thus more human and animal lives will potentially be saved.
- Be sure your pet is up to date on all vaccinations as recommended by your veterinarian.
- Prepare an animal disaster kit that contains the following stored in a waterproof container:
  - Medical records, vaccination history, and medications
  - Current photographs
  - Veterinarian phone number
  - Documentation of any behavior problems

- Alternate contact information
- First aid kit
- Leashes, collars, or harnesses (extra sturdy), and muzzle (if necessary) with identification tags
- A pet carrier for each animal
- Food and water bowls, litter pan for cats
- Food and water for at least 7 days, can opener
- Toys, blanket
- Make sure you have a plan on where to take your pets should you be asked to evacuate.
  - Contact DAR to determine where the DAR co-located pet shelters are.
  - Have a list of other places where you can evacuate with your pet (relatives, pet friendly motels, pet shelters, etc.) should conditions require you to evacuate.
- **For more information on emergency preparedness for companion animals and pets:**  
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