

GETTING OUT OF TOWN *FAST*

With hurricane season just around the corner, do you have an emergency kit prepared for all of your loved ones? Now is the time to establish a disaster plan and create an emergency kit for your family and pets. Each kit will need to be complete with all the essential supplies to help ensure that an evacuation is as smooth and stress free as possible.

Because we live near the Gulf Coast, there is usually an advanced warning when a disaster is headed our way. This gives many pet owners an opportunity to make plans and purchase any necessary supplies. A disaster kit for your pets include many of the same items that a person's kit may contain, but there are a few important differences. Here are some things to remember when making your pet's disaster preparedness emergency kit.

- ❖ Bring enough food and water for at least a week. If your pet prefers to

eat canned food, make sure to pack a manual can opener in case you do not have access to electricity.

- ❖ Just like humans, pets need a gallon of water per day. Even though your pet may not drink the entire gallon every day, it's a good idea to have extra water on hand in case they get into an unwanted substance that needs to be bathed off.
- ❖ Medical and vaccination records from the past year are a necessity when traveling with your pet in any situation. Boarding facilities, pet friendly hotels or veterinary hospitals may need to reference medical or vaccination records if your pet is new to their facility.
- ❖ Proper tags and licenses do not act as a medical record but may be helpful to have during the evacuation process.
- ❖ Make sure to have all medications clearly labeled with the name of the medication, milligram size or concentration of the liquid, and how frequently

they are taking the medication. This information will ensure that a veterinarian can dose your pet's medication appropriately. If possible, pack a weeks' worth of all current medications in case you do not have access to a pharmacy.

- ❖ Try to stay calm, especially during car rides. Animals pick up when you are nervous or when your mood changes, which can be stressful for everybody.

If there is an environmental emergency and an evacuation is mandatory, a list of emergency and critical care veterinarians throughout the country can be found at www.veccs.org. This resource can be utilized to find the location of most local emergency hospitals. Remember, the most important thing when preparing for an evacuation is to plan ahead and talk to your family veterinarian about what else they recommend, especially if you pet has any pre-existing medical problems.

