

Orange County Animal Services  
2769 Conroy Rd. Orlando, FL 32839  
**Contact: Vanessa Bouffard (407) 254-9141**

For Immediate Release

## **HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE, ARE YOUR PETS READY?**

*Officials urge pet owners to begin making preparations for an active hurricane season*

Orlando, Fla. –June 1, 2009- Orange County Animal Services urges residents to begin making preparations for an active hurricane season. Forecasters say there is a 70 percent chance of having nine to 14 named storms, of which four to seven could become hurricanes. For those with pets, preparation needs to start today.

“It is important for pet owners to have a written disaster plan that includes their pets,” said Orange County Animal Services Manager, Katherine Lockett. “Under no circumstances should people leave their pets behind,” says Lockett. The agency recommends pet owners begin making arrangements for a place to stay in the event of an evacuation. Orange County Government will offer pet friendly shelters. Locations will be announced by the Office of Emergency Management as storms approach.

Orange County Animal Services would like to help you prepare your pets for hurricane season by offering these tips.

### **Getting Ready**

Schedule an appointment to talk to your pet’s veterinarian about planning for a disaster. It is important for you to assemble a “*pet disaster kit*.” The kit and supplies should be stored in an accessible location in the event that someone else has to transport your pet. Always keep the kit updated and available.

- 1 gallon zipper storage bag to hold all the contents
- Sandwich size bags for pet treats and a small toy
- Pet Health Record (each pet should display a current rabies tag at all times)
- Current picture of your pet (also include a picture of you and your pet) with your name address and phone numbers
- Collar and leash for dogs, and an adjustable collar for cats
- An extra identification tag
- Any special information on your pet

Since you may not be home if an evacuation order is announced, find a trusted friend who is willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where the pets should be, know where your disaster supplies and kits are located, and have a key to your home. Share your plan with friends and relatives.

If forced to evacuate your home, your pet should NOT be left behind. As the disaster approaches, bring all pets in the house so that you won’t have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry. Pets are not permitted in Red Cross Shelters (except for working dogs for people with special needs). Plan to go to a friend, relative, hotel, or motel where your properly contained pet is welcome; do not wait until a disaster strikes to do your research. For information on pet friendly shelters in Orange County, call the government information center by dialing 3-1-1.

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### **Disaster Supplies for Pets**

- Have a pet carrier for each pet, where your pet can stand and turn around in. Write your name, address and phone number and include additional contact information for someone outside the area; preferably in another state
- Two week supply of pet food, water, bowls, cat litter/box, medications, and a manual can opener
- Newspapers, plastic bags, cleaner and disinfectants to handle pet waste
- A cotton sheet to cover the carrier to keep the pet calm
- First-Aid Kit. Ask your veterinarian for the supplies appropriate for your pet

### **Birds**

Transport birds in a secure travel carrier. Cover the carrier to provide the pet with additional security. During warm weather, use a plant mister to mist the bird's feathers. Provide fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Practice good hygiene by keeping the cage floor clean. Keep the carrier in a quiet area.

### **Small Pets**

Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for housing the animals while sheltered. Take bedding, food, bowls, and water bottles.

### **Reptiles**

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase, placed inside a secure carrier. If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking and a heating pad. Follow the same transporting instructions as for birds.

### **After the Disaster**

- The disaster will have altered your pet's normal scent markers and may cause them to get lost; so stay with them when they are outdoors
- Your pet will probably be disoriented and frightened. Be patient and understanding; the situation is just as traumatic to them as to you
- Consult your veterinarian if any behavior or physical problems persist
- Fallen power lines, scattered debris, flooding and misplaced wildlife can be a danger to your pet

For more information on how to prepare your pet for a disaster contact your veterinarian, call Orange County Animal Services at (407) 254-9140 or visit [www.ocnetpets.com/preparedpet](http://www.ocnetpets.com/preparedpet).

### ***About Orange County Animal Services***

Orange County Animal Services is one of Central Florida's largest pet rescue and adoption centers. Last year alone, Animal Services received more than 24,000 animals at its shelter. For 40 years, the agency's mission has been to protect the citizens and animals of Orange County. Its vision is to give abandoned and neglected pets a second chance to live long and healthy lives in safe, loving homes. For more information please visit [www.ocnetpets.com](http://www.ocnetpets.com).

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