



# Disaster Preparedness Guidelines for Bird Owners

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As a bird owner, you understand domesticated birds are completely reliant on you for their survival and well-being. Early planning and preparation for their care is especially important in times of disaster. Floods, fires, tornadoes and man-made disasters can make caring for your pet difficult, if not impossible.

## Before

- Familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that could occur in your area. Develop a written plan of action for each. Include a list of resources (suppliers, safe shelters, etc.), evacuation sites, emergency phone numbers and people who can help during an emergency. Keep the plan with important papers. Review the Disaster Plan regularly with everyone involved.
- Because animals are not allowed in emergency shelters for people, survey your home for the best location to leave your bird in the event you cannot take it with you. Birds should be housed off the floor, in their cages, away from drafts and other animal species. Bathrooms or areas with doors, but no windows, are best.
- Decide where to take your birds if evacuation is necessary. Contact veterinarians, animal shelters and humane societies ahead of time about their policies and ability to take pets in emergencies. Have several sites in mind, in case your first choice is unavailable. The home of a friend or relative outside the disaster area is best. Move the pet early, if possible.
- Familiarize yourself with several evacuation routes to your destination. Avoid routes likely to be heavily travelled by people.
- Permanently identify birds by microchip or leg bands. Record its breed, sex, age (if known) and color. Keep copies, along with a current photo of each bird, with important papers.
- Keep vaccinations and boosters up-to-date. Record the dates, dosages and types of medications/health products the birds have received. Record dosing instructions and dietary requirements. If the bird is on medication, keep a one-week to two-week supply on hand. Store this information with the Disaster Plan and other papers.
- Compile an Emergency Disaster Kit. Make sure it is always ready.

## Emergency Disaster Kit

Transportable cage  
Two-week supply of food  
Newspaper  
Cage cover/blanket  
Hot water bottle

Two-week supply of water  
Nonspill food and water bowls/dispensers  
Paper towels and plastic bags for clean-up  
First aid kit  
Toys

## During

- Listen to the Emergency Broadcast System radio/tv station. Keep birds caged; they may sense danger and be difficult to capture.
- If possible, evacuate your birds early to ensure their safety and ease their stress. Do not endanger yourself or others in a rescue.
- If you evacuate with your birds, take all vaccination and medical records, and the Emergency Disaster Kit with you. Call ahead to your destination to make sure the site is still available.
- If you must evacuate, but cannot take your birds, leave them in the preselected area appropriate for disaster type. Cover the cage with a light cloth or sheet. Take all vaccination/medical records and identification photos with you when you depart.

## After

- Check your bird for injury and exposure to chemicals. Contact your veterinarian, if you have any concerns.
- Monitor your birds closely for several days after a disaster. Many commonly show signs of disease (respiratory, gastrointestinal, etc.) several days following a stressful episode. Consult a veterinarian immediately at any signs of lethargy, loss of appetite, loose stool, depression, injury, or sitting on cage bottom.
- If you have to move to new surroundings, do not remove your bird from its cage until it is calm; then do so only in a closed room. Frightened birds may become aggressive or fly away.
- If your bird has been without food and water for a prolonged time, give it small amounts every few hours for several days. Allowing the bird to gorge can be harmful. Work up to a normal volume of food gradually.
- Let your bird have plenty of uninterrupted sleep to recover from the stress and trauma. Birds will usually remain calm in isolated, darkened areas, with cages covered.



For more information about Disaster Preparedness, contact:  
Indiana State Board of Animal Health  
1202 E. 38th St., Discovery Hall, Suite 100; Indianapolis, IN 46205-2898  
Phone: 317/544-2400 Fax: 317/974-2011  
[www.in.gov/boah](http://www.in.gov/boah)