High winds, thunder and lightning during severe storms often produce anxiety, fear and a need to escape for some pets. Take preparedness measures to protect and care for your pet during severe storms.

### Before a Severe Storm

- **Identification.**
  - Major storms can destroy fences allowing frightened pets to run away.
  - Make sure your pet has some form of identification (collar, microchip) that will let people contact you if your pet becomes separated from you.
  - Take a photo of the pet and keep it with its medical records.

- **Create a safe haven.**
  - Try to create a safe place for your pets.
  - Practice loading your pet into their cage or carrier.
  - Know their favorite hiding locations.
  - Some pets will feel more comfortable in a small crate or under a bed.

- **Try to desensitize your pet.**
  - Over a period of time, expose your pet to an intensity level of noise that doesn’t frighten the animal.
  - Pair the noise with something pleasant, like a treat or a fun game.

### During a Severe Storm

- **Pet behavior.**
  - A pet’s behavior may change before, during and after the storm.
  - Consult your veterinarian. Medication may be available which can help reduce your pet’s anxiety levels for short time periods.
  - Distract your pet. Encourage them to engage in any activity that captures their attention and distracts them from being fearful.

- **Pet safety.**
  - Bring pets indoor well in advance of a storm.
  - NEVER leave pets tied up outside.
  - If they are frightened, reassure them and remain calm.
  - Pets should be provided the same cover as humans during severe weather.
  - Keep pets away from windows.
  - Do not give your pet a bath during a storm.

### After a Severe Storm

- **Pet behavior.**
  - Be aware that a pet’s behavior may change before, during and after a disaster.
  - In the first few hours after the storm, leash your pets when they go outside until they readjust to the situation.

- **Pet safety.**
  - Keep your pet away from storm damaged areas.

- **Lost pets.**
  - If pets cannot be found after a disaster, contact the local animal control office.
  - Bring along a picture of your pet, if possible.

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