



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.

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health with funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture MOU-2010-HSEMD-004. June 2010.

