



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Disaster Preparedness: Barn Fires

Barn fires are the leading disaster for horses

Preventing barn fires and being prepared in the event of a fire can mean the difference between life and death of your animals. Knowledge of the danger of fires and how to deal with them are essential, and vigilance is key to prevention.

Fire prevention is key

- Prohibit smoking in or around the barn. A discarded cigarette can ignite dry bedding or hay in seconds.
- Avoid parking tractors and vehicles in or near the barn. Engine heat and backfires can spark a flame.

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- Store other machinery and flammable materials outside the barn.
- Inspect electrical systems regularly and immediately correct any problems. Rodents can chew on electrical wiring and cause damage that quickly becomes a fire hazard.
- Keep appliances to a minimum in the barn. Use stall fans, space heaters, and radios only when someone is in the barn.
- Be sure hay is dry before storing it. Hay that is too moist may spontaneously combust. Store hay outside the barn in a dry, covered area when possible.

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Be prepared for a barn fire: It can save your animals' lives

- Keep aisles, stall doors, and barn doors free of debris and equipment.
- Mount fire extinguishers around the stable, especially at all entrances.
- Have a planned evacuation route for every stall in the barn.
- Familiarize employees with your evacuation plans.
- Post emergency telephone numbers at each telephone and at each entrance. Emergency telephone numbers should include those of the barn manager, veterinarian, emergency response, and, if you have horses, qualified handlers.
- Also keep your barn's street address clearly posted to relay to the 911 operator or your community's emergency services.



- Be sure your address and the entrance to your property are clearly visible from the main road.
- Consider installing smoke alarms and heat detectors throughout the barn. New heat sensors can detect rapidly changing temperatures in your barn. The heat sensors should be hooked up to sirens that will quickly alert you and your neighbors to a possible barn fire.

- Host an open house for emergency services personnel in your area to familiarize them with the layout of your property. If you have horses, provide them with tips on horse handling or present a mini-seminar with hands-on training for horse handling.
- Familiarize your animals with emergency procedures and common activities they would encounter during a disaster. Try to desensitize them to flashlights and flashing lights.

In the event of a barn fire

- Immediately call 911 or your local emergency services.
- Do not enter the barn if it is already engulfed in flames.
- If it is safe for you to enter the barn, evacuate animals one at a time starting with the most accessible ones.
- Never let animals loose in an area where they are able to return to the barn.

If you have horses

- Put a halter and lead rope on each horse when you open the stall door. Be aware that horses tend to run back into burning barns out of fear and confusion.
- Blindfold horses only if absolutely necessary. Many horses will balk at a blindfold, making evacuation more difficult and time consuming.
- Move them to paddocks close enough to reach quickly but far enough from the barn that they won't be affected by the fire and smoke.
- Be sure to have all your horses checked by a veterinarian after the fire. Smoke inhalation can cause serious lung damage and respiratory complications. Horses are prone to stress and may experience colic after a fire.



Make a Disaster Plan for Your Pets

How to keep pets safe in natural disasters or everyday emergencies

TO-DO LIST FOR PROTECTING YOUR PETS IN A DISASTER

1. Start getting ready now

ID your pet:

Make sure that your cat or dog is wearing a collar and identification that is up to date and visible at all times. You'll increase your chances of being reunited with lost pet by having him or her microchipped. If your pet is adopted from a shelter or rescue organization, make sure the registration has been transferred to you and is not still with the adoption group.

Put your cell phone number on your pet's tag. It may also be a good idea to include the phone number of a friend or relative outside your immediate area—in case you have had to evacuate.

Put together your disaster kit:

Every member of your family should know what he or she needs to take when you evacuate. You'll also need supplies for your pet. Stock up on non-perishables well ahead of time, and have everything ready to go at a moment's notice. Keep everything accessible and stored in sturdy containers (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.) that can be carried easily. Any dry pet food should be stored in air-tight containers and refreshed every 6 months.

If you live in an area prone to flooding or hurricanes, make a kit to keep in your car in case you have to evacuate quickly. If you live in an area where tornadoes occur, store supplies in a tornado-proof room or cellar.

A basic disaster kit

- **Food and water for at least five days** for each pet, bowls and a manual can opener if you are packing canned pet food. People need at least one gallon of water per person per day. While your pet may not need that much, keep an extra gallon on hand if your pet has been exposed to chemicals or flood waters and needs to be rinsed.
- **Medications and medical records** stored in a waterproof container and a first aid kit. A pet first aid book is also a good idea.
- **Cat litter box, litter, litter scoop, garbage bags** to collect all pets' waste.
- **Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers** to transport pets safely and to ensure that your pets can't escape. Carriers should be large enough to allow your pet to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down. (Your pet may have to stay in the carrier for hours at a time.) Be sure to have a secure cage with no loose objects inside it to accommodate smaller pets—who may also need blankets or towels for bedding and warmth as well as special items, depending on their species.
- **Current photos of you with your pets and descriptions of your pets** to help others identify them in case you and your pets become separated—and to prove that they are yours once you're reunited.
- **Pet beds and toys**, if you can easily take them, to reduce stress.
- **Written information about your pets' feeding schedules, medical conditions, and behavior issues along with the name and number of your veterinarian** in case you have to board your pets or place them in foster care.