

Do you Have an Emergency Plan for Your Pets?



It does not matter where you live; you should have an emergency plan that includes your pets.

Every year bush fires, floods, and other emergency events see people forced out of their homes at short notice. Often during these events, people either put their lives at risk or are injured, because they are trying to save their pets or are refusing to leave their property without them.

Many of Dogs Victoria's members live on the city fringe, and in regional and rural areas. However, fires and storms in the last few years have shown us that even those members living in the suburbs are not without risk.

Dogs Victoria breeders (who are likely to have more than just one or two dogs) **must** have an emergency evacuation plan. However all Dogs Victoria members should make sure their pets are included in their emergency plans. Whether you have dogs, cats, chooks or even horses, you need to consider how you would manage them should an emergency event impact you or your property.

You need to think about how you would transport, or relocate them if the need to evacuate arises. Whether you would move your animals to another place on high risk days, and what you might do to reduce the risks to your pets if an emergency event occurred when you were away from home.

Do you have the necessary equipment?

- » Crates for transportation and temporary housing
- » Leads, collars, water, bowls and feed all easily accessible or packed ready to go
- » A 'pet evacuation kit' with any necessary medications
- » Identification in case your pets get lost - collar tags and up-to-date microchip details
- » If you are planning on using a dog trailer, is it safe and roadworthy

Do your family or the people who live with you know what to do and where everything is?

If you already have a plan in place, now is an excellent time to review it, rehearse it, and make sure all household members know what to do.

For those members in high-risk fire areas, it is a good idea to keep a kit of clothes and essential items packed and ready to take if a fire was approaching.

If you have one, having your dog float packed and even hooked to the car on high danger days can save valuable time. A well-packed float – complete with leads, collars, bowls, food and water – can mean you can up a go at a moment's notice, and if you are not home, a friend or neighbour could quickly load your dogs, hitch up your trailer and move your dogs to safety for you.

If you have more than a few pets, you may not be able to evacuate all of them. In this case, you need to have a written plan on where the animals who are remaining will be housed, and make sure that place is maintained in such a way that it provides safety in an emergency – keeping grass short, keeping guttering clean, clearing away rubbish and debris that could ignite in a fire.

For livestock such as horses, a large area that is mowed short, sparsely vegetated or ploughed means animals can move freely to escape the flames, but remember that fencing often burns during a fire, and the animals may escape or wander once the fire front has passed.





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If you plan to stay and fight a fire, you need to make sure you have well-maintained and functioning equipment to fight a fire – water pumps, hoses, and of course a water source such as a dam or tank in case the regular town water supply is cut off.

Appropriate fire-retardant clothing, heavy shoes, and the like are also necessary to protect yourself. Most Country Fire Authority (CFA) units conduct bushfire readiness classes coming into summer, so ask at your local station, or visit the CFA website.

You can also download the 'Vic Emergency' app, so you will know if there are any fires, floods or extreme weather events in your area.

The Victorian Government has a dedicated section on the Animal Welfare Victoria website with lots of information about planning for your home, farm and animals in the case of a fire or other emergency.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/pets-and-emergencies>



Some Tips From Their Site:

- » Include pets, horses and livestock in your emergency plan
- » Prepare an emergency/disaster kit and place it in a prominent place; include food, water bowls, leads, bedding, medication, collars and leads.
- » In your emergency plan, identify where you will evacuate your animals to.
- » Remember that evacuation centres and 'Neighbourhood Safer Places/Places of Last Resort' are not able to facilitate animals.
- » If you are unable to evacuate, determine the safest area for your animals on your property to shelter from the fire front, and move them there early.
- » Ensure animals have access to at least a two day supply of water
- » Ensure any animals you cannot evacuate have some form of identification on them.
- » Have equipment accessible to provide emergency first aid for your animals after the fire

The CFA also has information in regards to fires and pets - <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/pets-and-bushfires>

During the summer **Fire Danger Period**, if you plan to evacuate, do so early on the morning of Extreme or the night before for Catastrophic fire danger days.

So now might be a perfect time to review all of the information and check your emergency plan is up to date!

It is important to remember that your animals are your responsibility!