

Disaster Preparedness

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Disasters can happen anytime and anywhere and can take many different forms, from barn fires to earthquakes, from a propane line explosion to flooding from a violent storm. Any of these may necessitate evacuation. If you have horses or other large animals, it is important to have a plan to move your animals to a safe area. A plan is even more critical if you have a number of them.

During an emergency, the time you have to evacuate your horses will be limited. If you are unprepared or wait until the last minute to evacuate, you could be told by emergency management officials that you must leave your horses behind. Once you leave your property, you have no way of knowing how long you will be kept out of the area. If left behind, your horses could be unattended for days without care, food or water. To help avoid this situation, the following information and suggestions are offered by the Humane Society of the United States for planning for emergencies. With an effective emergency plan, you may have enough time to move your animals to safety.

Evacuation Tips

- Make arrangements in advance to have your horses trailered in case of an emergency.
- Keep halters ready for your horses. Each halter should include the horses name, your name, your telephone number and another emergency phone number where someone can be reached.
- Prepare a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible.
- Have a supply of water, hay, feed and medications for several days for each horse you are evacuating.
- Make sure your horses are comfortable being loaded onto a trailer. If they are not accustomed to being loaded onto a trailer, practice the procedure so they become used to it.
- Know where you can take your horses in an emergency evacuation. Make arrangements with another horse owner to stable your horses if needed.

Contact your local animal care and control agency, agricultural extension agent or local emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area.

BARN FIRES: The Leading Disaster for Horse Owners

Preventing barn fires and being prepared in the event of a fire can mean a the difference between life and death for your horses. Some ways to prevent a barn fire include:

- Prohibit smoking in or around the barn.
- Avoid parking tractors and vehicles in or near the barn.
- 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.
- Install smoke alarms and heat detectors throughout the barn. New heat sensors can detect rapidly changing temperatures in your barn.