

Practical Tips for Dealing with your Potbelly in a time of Disaster ~

By Jacque, Proud Owner of Lily the pbp

Fire! Fire! The skies are filling up with black smoke everywhere. It was time to get thinking what we would do with our animals in case of emergency. The biggest question was could we deal with our animals in an emergency? It does not matter if you have a pot belly or just a wonderful old dog; the question is what would you do? This mind set was a thought after the last huge fire that ran through the Yorba Linda and Brea area just recently.

I set out to ask some questions. Patty Williams, agriculture teacher for Orange High School, was a wonderful resource. She has assisted in the evacuation and rescue of large livestock with Hurricane Katrina and our local Santiago Fire. Her live stock area at the high school is deemed as an official rescue site for large livestock for the Orange County area and she has trained her students in the assistance for this. Most recently she opened up the live stock area at the high school for the Yorba Linda Fires. Her most practical advice is to create a grab and go bag. It should consist of food, water, health essentials, bedding, and vet info if needed. Next is to practice, practice, and practice the loading of the animals. Have a disaster drill! In this most recent fire they were expecting four potbelly pigs but the pigs did not make it to her shelter because they would not load.

What is your emergency plan? Where will you take the animals? Many people do not have a way to transport them. It is the owner's responsibility to evacuate them because animal control and other rescue groups most likely will not be able to get to everyone. For example, last year several horses had to be left in the back of Dove Canyon because the owners did not listen to the evacuation warning.

I am new to being a potbelly caregiver. I have to ask questions of everyone. It's like having a baby and not knowing what to do. I do know this.....I'm planning on taking the dog and the pig for a ride in my truck on a regular basis.

Disaster Preparation

~ by Laura, Proud Owner of Charlotte the pbp

Motel 6? Some disaster shelters are not allowed to accept pets because of health and safety regulations and other considerations. It could be difficult to find shelter for your animals in the middle of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

Contact hotels and motels outside of your immediate area to find out about their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived during an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.

Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.

Prepare a contact list of persons available to assist in transport and/or board your pig(s) if necessary.

You should not rely on animal shelters to provide emergency shelter for your pets during a disaster because the majority of shelters are already over-burdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those that are displaced by disasters. The animal shelters should be your last resort.

A Pet Disaster Supply Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you will need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be easily carried. Your pet disaster supply kit should include:

- * Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit specific to the animals you own.
- * Leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely to ensure that your animals cannot escape.
- * Current photos of your pets in case they get lost. Make sure you know the numbers of local animal shelters in case you do lose your pet. There is a good chance it may be turned in.
- * Food, portable water, bowls, pet beds, blankets and toys.
- * Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- * Pet waste bags
- * MOST IMPORTANT – A contact list!! This list identifies persons that may be able to assist with transport or boarding.

Be Proactive!

Since warning signs are typically issued hours, and sometimes days in advance, be proactive to protect your pets at the first sign of a disaster.

- * Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- * Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- * Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- * Make sure all of your pets, pigs included, are wearing collars/harnesses and securely fastened, up-to-date identification.
- * Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or a friend or relative outside the disaster area in case you become separated from your pet. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag.
- * Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely.

Lastly, if you must evacuate your home, do not leave your animals behind. Take them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. Since there is a possibility that a disaster may strike while you are away from home, consider placing a "Pet Alert" sticker on a front-facing window to alert emergency workers' to the presence of animals in your home. You could also take it a step further and speak with your neighbors about setting up a plan to help one another in someone's absence.