

DANCER'S LEGACY FOUNDATION
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Fact Sheet: Fire and Natural Disaster Evacuation for Horses

With wildfires, floods, and other emergencies requiring safe evacuation throughout the United States, it is critical to plan ahead of time for evacuations. Natural disasters often strike with little warning, so being prepared can save your life as well as the life of your horse(s) and other animals. The ultimate responsibility for the safety of your horse(s) lies with you, the owner.

Plan Ahead

Develop and practice a “disaster plan.” Being prepared in advance will help you and your animals. Include a plan for what to do if you are not home when disaster strikes.

Plan in advance where to take your animals if an evacuation is necessary. Contact regional stables, local fairgrounds, veterinary clinics, your county’s horse council, and rescue organizations regarding their ability to take in larger animals in the event of an emergency. Contact local hotels and campgrounds for you and your smaller pets.

Familiarize yourself with different evacuation routes from your home to your safe destination. Roads can become blocked off, so know your escape routes.

Try to have trailer space for all of your livestock. Inspect and maintain your trailer on a regular basis and keep your towing vehicle well fueled.

Train your animals to load easily and quickly. Seek professional training assistance if needed.

Provide identification for all of your animals. You can spray-paint your name and telephone number on horses’ sides, make an identification neckband using duct tape, or braid an identifying livestock ear tag into your horses’ manes.

Have photographs and other identifying information of your horses, such as brand inspection certificates and Coggins tests. Also ensure that originals or copies of this information are stored in a safe place.

Have with you at least a 48-hours supply of feed and other supplies.

Develop and practice emergency evacuation procedures with your neighbors. Set up a telephone networking protocol with each other in the event you (or they) are not home in the event a disaster strikes.

When Disaster Strikes

First and foremost, remain calm and follow your plan.

Receive updated information by tuning into your local television or radio station and via the internet. Dial 911 for actual emergencies.

Evacuate your animals before the disaster occurs, if possible. Once fire or flooding starts, you may not be allowed to enter your area or have enough time to leave with them.

Remove horse blankets and ensure all animals are marked with proper identification. Take vet records with you.

Use wet towels or bandanas to protect your horses' eyes, ears and noses in case of fire.

Halters with metal fittings can burn or melt if exposed to extreme heat. Cotton rope halters are the best for fire emergencies.

Protect yourself by wearing long-sleeved cotton or wool shirts, pants, hat, leather gloves and boots and goggles if available. A bandana can also be used as a mask for yourself.

Horses will run back into a burning stable. Close all barn windows, stall and barn entry doors.

After the Emergency

Before returning with your animals, check your property for possible damage to fences, buildings, and any debris that may harm them.

Familiar landmarks and scents may have changed. Your horses may become confused, so watch them closely for an appropriate amount of time after you return home.

If you lose an animal during a disaster, contact evacuation sites, vet clinics, humane societies, stables and surrounding facilities that might be keeping them. If you find someone's animal, keep it separate from your animals until the owner returns or it has undergone a vet examination.

Use extreme caution when trying to help an unknown or frightened animal. Work in pairs whenever possible.