



### *Preppers and their Pets – Another Preppers Dilemma*

Here is a subject that really needs to get more attention than it does.

While there is a ton of information on the web about prepping, very little deals with what becomes of Fido or Felix.

Preppers, like everyone else, are very attached to their pets, and being more tuned to sustainability, frequently have other animals as well.



Chickens, goats, sheep, horses, rabbits, hamsters, goldfish, you name it, we all have them and love them.

But do we do some prepping specifically for them?

In a low level emergency, most of us have a quantity of food on hand to see our pets through, but some pets are extremely sensitive to even low level events.



Fish, especially exotics, need a controlled water temperature which may be difficult to maintain in a power failure.

Some pets,(hairless dogs, Chihuahuas, etc.) may be very sensitive to weather temperatures as well.



So even low level events require some planning for these animals.



What happens in a bigger event, like Katrina or Sandy?

Well, what we saw in Katrina was pretty depressing. Many people refused to evacuate because they were not allowed to take their pets.

Some couldn't evacuate since the farm animals needed to be cared for regardless of weather conditions.

Because of this, the following laws were passed.

**PETS Act.** Approved by the federal government in 2006, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act contains provisions to include companion animals in all disaster planning, according to the Humane Society of the United States. The act requires that local and state governments include pets in all natural disaster evacuation plans in order for these governments to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants. The act also gives FEMA the authority to assist local governments in making such plans. The bill sets aside federal funding to establish pet-friendly emergency shelters and authorizes FEMA to help evacuate those with pets and just the pets themselves.

## **Louisiana's Pet Evacuation Law 615**

o In 2006, after Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana passed a bill to aid local parishes and municipalities in evacuating people and their pets and provide shelter during a natural disaster, according to the Animal Law Coalition. The measure established the Louisiana State Animal Response Team (LSART) to oversee and plan pet evacuation during emergency situations. The bill requires the establishment of an identification system to reunite pets and their owners after emergencies. According to the LSART Household Pet Evacuation & Sheltering Manual, people arriving at shelters with pets will attach plastic bar-coded tab-band collars (given to them by evacuation employees) around their pets' necks and attach matching bar-coded bands to their own wrists. This way, pets and owners can reunite after a disaster by comparing the bar-coded tags on owners and pets. This procedure applies only to dogs and cats. The bill provides for the set up of emergency shelters for pets and allows owners to ride on public transportation with pets in carriers. The Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry oversee these plans for each local area.

## **Other State Pet Evacuation Laws**

o Along with Louisiana, Florida, New Hampshire, Vermont and Hawaii all passed pet evacuation laws in 2006, according to Stateline. These laws contain provisions for animal shelters during evacuations. Service animals must accompany their owners and do not have to go to separate shelters during natural disasters. In New York, the transit authority revised its rules allowing pets to ride on public transportation in an emergency situation. Connecticut, Virginia, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, New Mexico and Nevada have laws that require the inclusion of pets in planning for natural disasters. Maine passed a law that calls for the development of an Animal Response Team and California now requires that the Office of Emergency Services incorporate the California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES) in its planning for evacuations.

So, everything is good now right?

**Well, no.**

- First note, FEMA did not move into the Sandy area until three days had passed, then immediately ‘closed’ because of a snowstorm. They did not become operational until almost 6 days after the storm. -



Note that the law mentions “companion animals”. This means **dogs** and **cats**.

Not goats, not your rabbits, (unless you have only one, that might be considered a ‘companion animal’);, not your Boa or Tarantula.

Okay, so at least the ‘majority’ of pets can be taken with me right?

**Well, no again. Sorry.**

Read the second law (Louisiana 615), and note carefully the idea hidden in here.

...“the establishment of an identification system to reunite pets and their owners **after** emergencies.”...

**AFTER** the emergencies.

It's in the last law as well, hidden carefully. "Service animals must accompany their owners and do not have to go to **separate** shelters during natural disasters"

What does that mean? The way I read this, pets will be evacuated separately, excepting "service animals".

The ID tags are so they can return them to the owners at some point later, **NOT** at a shelter or during an emergency.

...“This procedure applies only to dogs and cats. The bill provides for the set up of emergency shelters for pets and allows owners to ride on public transportation with pets in carriers”...

Ok, so forget the bunnies...

Here they make it pretty clear. **SMALL** dogs and cats can ride on public transportation, **IN A CARRIER.**

Not sure about you, but a carrier for my Bull Mastiff would look like an elephants cage, and I am sure I couldn't lift it, or get it through the door of a bus or train. Could you lift your dog in a carrier?



Note also that these are separate shelters FOR PETS, not with you in your shelter.

You will be able to carry them to the pet shelters on public transportation, **but you are not staying with them.**

Needless to say, pets with special medical needs and diets will be cared for by whomever they can get to staff the shelters, so expect the worst.

Read “**Other State Laws**” carefully.

...“In New York, the transit authority revised its rules allowing pets to ride on public transportation in an emergency situation.”...

Let’s look at that law. (BOLD CAPS MY EMPHASIS)

...“The Transit Authority is drafting changes to its pet policy on subways and buses to allow people to transport their pets - uncaged -in case of an emergency. The Office of Emergency Management made the request, after seeing how many people were reluctant to leave their pets during Hurricane Katrina. Of course, only **legal** pets are allowed (no tigers or even ferrets!) as long as they are “**LEASHED AND MUZZLED**” according to the Daily News, though **TRANSIT WORKERS COULD KICK OUT MEAN PETS**. Here are some more rules the Daily News mentions off the **DRAFT** it saw:

- Owners need to have **documentation** showing dogs are **LICENSED** and their **SHOTS** are up-to-date.
- The leashes can't be more than 6 feet long and must be in the hands of adults.
- Owners on board should stand so as to exert control over their pets.
- “Pets should be taken to the back of buses, and on trains they should be ushered away from doors”, the proposal states.

“We think those dog carrier/purses count as cages, since the MTA just requests that the pets are in a closed container (like drinks!). And given that flooding would make subway travel an issue, we hope the Staten Island Ferry will relook at its rules for pets as well.”.... *so says the Gotham Times...*



Well now, “leashed and **muzzled**”.

How many people have a muzzle for their dogs?

What about cats?

And you had better keep those shots records handy, or they are not getting on board.

Note that this is a DRAFT.

In other words, this is not in effect yet, many months after Sandy.

Interestingly, the page reference to the transit authority's statement in the first line is gone, it returns a "**page not found**" error.

I went to the Transit Authorities website for the latest rules -

<http://www.mta.info/nyct/rules/rules.htm>

***There is not one mention of pets in all 13 sections.***

Typical of these bureaucracies, it will be many more months, probably years before such things actually become 'law'.

A good indicator of how pets will be treated is to look at past events. We know about Katrina, what about hurricane Sandy?

Here are a few headlines and pull quotes to look over –

...“SAN DIEGO -- Sixty dogs and cats that were displaced by Superstorm Sandy have arrived in San Diego following a cross-country flight.

The plane carrying the animals landed at Lindberg Field Saturday, and they were taken to a shelter in Rancho Santa Fe.

A spokeswoman for the Helen Woodward Animal Center said the dogs and cats were facing  **euthanization**  at New York and New Jersey animal shelters  **that lost power after the storm struck**  last month.”...

-presumably these are animals that were currently housed in those shelters, not current 'pets', *but note* the New York and New Jersey shelters had to move animals because they lost power.  **These are the very same shelters that would be caring for your pet in an 'emergency'.**

It continues...

...“But it’s unclear just how many pets have been impacted by the Superstorm. There are hundreds — if not thousands — of animals in need across the region. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reports that shelters in hard-hit New York and Long Island are temporary homes to **nearly 400 animals.**”...

So I assume overcrowding may be a concern here...

...“Some groups have expressed a dire need, such as the Baltimore Humane Society, where power had been out for days, **leaving animals cold and in the dark.** In addition, **their pet food and cat litter delivery has been canceled for the week.** The group has several needs, including donations of food, time and money.”...

Yup, if power is out, and transportation limited, your pet will be impacted by this as well...

Remember the Sandy Timeline - In New York, the main highways were closed and the state of emergency declared **48 hours before the storm hit.** The next day, one full day before the storm, the **trains stopped running** and all bridges were closed.

### **So much for bringing Rover to a shelter.**

...“As Hurricane Sandy dumped four feet of sewage into the All Creatures Veterinary Hospital, in Long Beach, L.I., last week, Willie the resident house cat took refuge high on a ledge. But today the brave survivor remains trapped in a cage in unfamiliar surroundings, and is crying for a new home.”

“...Animal rescuers are concerned that Sandy and the many other cats and dogs at the city-run shelter will have no chance of being reunited with their owners. And they worry they will be euthanized if nobody claims them.”...

“Half the people don’t have phone, electricity or gas to look for their animals **or identification to prove they are the owner,**” said one well-respected animal rescuer familiar with the shelter situation, who asked not to be identified.

It’s also about the money....



**“ On Thursday, one owner reportedly stormed out of the Brooklyn shelter because she could not pay the \$190 fee to claim her mastiff, sources said.”...**

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/sandy-displaced-animals-article-1.1199764#ixzz2J0RefM9t>

Seriously people, you just cannot make this stuff up....

**You heard that right.**

**It is not FREE to leave your animal, and they will be held until payment is made.**

Keep in mind, this was long after Katrina in 2006, and all these new laws were supposed to protect pets.

Enough depressing stories.

My point here is, if you do not believe that the authorities have your best interests in mind when they ask you to evacuate, why think your pet will do any better?

The evidence is all here, plainly recorded.

So for pets, what can be done?

Dogs or cats should be moved with you for short term events, such as hurricane Sandy, but to have done this, you would have to pack everyone up and leave **at least two days prior to the storm arriving.**

Otherwise you will run the very real risk of having the highways and bridges closed before you can get going.

For other animals though, some serious planning is needed.

The first thing to consider is whether you should really have pets that are not suited to the environment where you are keeping them. Exotic fish are a delight to watch, but are very dependent upon keeping a stable environment going. The same applies to other exotic pets.

**Farm animals**, such as goats and sheep and chickens, will usually survive the environmental variables, but need to have access to food, water, and dry land.

They need to be located in areas that do not flood, and some type of long term food supply should be built in.

The long term feeders for dogs or cats can be adapted to this, as can automated deer feeders.



Have cages available to move animals in. They may not be comfortable, but in an emergency you can confine the animals so they do not escape, or can be moved elsewhere.

In an extreme emergency, cats and dogs have been released into the wild, sometimes on purpose, many times through a storm and its ensuing damage. Many cats can survive in wild conditions, although coyotes seem to really find them delicious.

Some dogs will also survive in a wild environment, but these are generally breeds closest to the wolf like shepherds, and larger animals.

Toy breeds, and genetic mutants, which unfortunately is much of the dog world, are not equipped to survive in an outdoor environment.

Chickens will live in the wild for awhile, but they have numerous natural enemies, and attrition will slowly get to them.

If you are a prepper and a pet owner, take the time to plan out a worst case scenario for your pet, and take what measures you can.

Just like any other member of your family, stockpile a variety of food and medicines for them, maybe even some warm clothes, and pack it in a transport cage, ready to go if need be.

**Even your puppy needs a bugout bag.**

For more information, see this article: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/27/hurricane-sandy-pet-emergency-plan\\_n\\_2031909.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/27/hurricane-sandy-pet-emergency-plan_n_2031909.html)