

Julie Kuenstle  
VP of Communications  
713.870.0304

## Recent Flooding is Critical Reminder to Include Pets in Disaster Preps

*National Hurricane Preparedness Week Runs Through May 11*

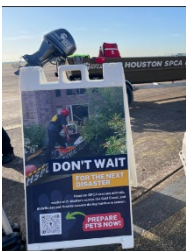
### [Images and B-roll Here](#)

HOUSTON (May 6, 2023) – During National Hurricane Preparedness Week, the Houston SPCA will be distributing a limited number of [pet disaster preparedness starter kits](#) with every pet adoption while supplies last. As the lead agency during natural disasters for pets, the Houston SPCA's Emergency Response Team has rescued countless animals during natural disasters over the past several decades including Hurricane Harvey, Ike and assisted after Hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas.



“Even before a hurricane or other natural disaster strikes, it’s critical to prepare essentials for all your family members, including your pets to help reduce their stress levels, especially if you have to evacuate,” said Dr. Roberta Westbrook, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer at the Houston SPCA. Safety tips for pets include:

A **pet emergency kit** should include a two-week supply of pet food and water as well as medication and vaccination records. Ensure dogs and cats wear collars with ID tags, in addition to having a microchip with **current** contact information. Add a second contact outside the greater Houston area in case land lines and cell phone service are not working immediately following a disaster. A [printable checklist in both English and Spanish can be found here](#) Also:



- Check the fence line and gate in your backyard to block any possible escape routes.
- Bring your pets inside your home in advance of a hurricane or flooding event.
- Create a safe place for pets, such as the inside of a pet crate in a quiet room. This will keep them from hiding and it enables you to evacuate more quickly if necessary.
- Place some of their favorite toys in their crate, as it can help lower anxiety levels.
- Just like your other family members, make sure your pet isn't near windows or shelves during a disaster.

**Finally, if you must evacuate, be sure to take your pet.** If conditions are unsafe for people, they are unsafe for pets. Pet owners should identify an evacuation route and make temporary housing arrangements well before a storm hits.

**During the record-breaking number of hurricanes near the Gulf Coast in 2020, including Hurricane Laura, the Houston SPCA Emergency Response Team:**

- Transported, provided medical care, and/or adoption services for more than 450 animals along the Gulf Coast including Galveston Island Humane Society between late August through September.

**During Hurricane Harvey, the Houston SPCA Emergency Response Team:**

- Rescued 2,300 Harvey-impacted dogs, cats, equine, farm animals, and native wildlife.
- Reunited 300 animals with their original owners, including 88 horses.
- Distributed 120 tons of donated pet food and supplies throughout the community.



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