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Transporting Animals

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Transporting Cats and Dogs

You will need a way to confine and safely transport your dog(s) and cat(s). The options include an airline crate, collapsible wire crate or a soft-sided carrier for cats, puppies and small dogs. Cover the transport cage with a towel or blanket to help keep them calm. If it is hot, make sure they do not overheat.

An airline crate or collapsible wire crate may be what you have to use to house your dog or cat after you reach a safe location. If this is the case, be sure the crate is large enough for the animal to comfortably lie down. For cats, they will need additional space for a *small* litter box.

Many crates come with a food and water dish that can be attached to the crate. Otherwise, you can buy them, but make sure they are the type that attaches to the metal door, so they won't get tipped over.

If you do not have a crate, then put a harness on the dog and cat and attach a leash. Harnesses are better than collars because they cannot slip off. If you do not have an ID tag on the harness, get one made. Any large pet store has the machine to make them and even Walmart does. Add your cell phone and not a home phone number. Still keep the collar on the dog or cat if they have one, especially if they have ID on it.

Transporting Birds

If the cage your bird lives in is too large to put in your car, then you will need a smaller one they can comfortably live in while evacuated. Do not have anything in the cage that can swing when the car is moving and injure your bird. Be sure to leave at least one perch. If you are using a different cage, be sure to have a food and water bowl inside.

While transporting your bird cover the cage with a towel. This will help to calm them down. Birds are very sensitive to smoke, so keep the windows up in the car and run the air conditioner in hot weather.

After you get to where you will be staying put the cage in a quiet location and cover as necessary to protect the bird as well as keeping it calm.

Transporting Small Caged Animals

These would include such animals as mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils and rabbits.

If the cage your small animal lives in is too large to put in your car, then you will need a smaller one they can comfortably live in while evacuated. Make sure the door is securely fastened. Do not put small animals in a cardboard box because they can chew through the cardboard and escape. Keep the cage out of direct sunlight and away from drafts. Cover the cage with a towel to help keep them calm.

Transporting Amphibians, Reptiles, Tortoises and Turtles

If the cage your reptile(s) normally lives in is way too large to move and put in a car, then you will need to have a smaller, more manageable cage. Make sure it is still large enough for them to comfortably live in while evacuated. Some reptiles need a heat source, which requires electricity. In case electricity is not available where you will be living after you evacuate, look at getting a battery powered heat source. Be sure to maintain an ideal as possible environment (humidity, heat or moisture) for your amphibian(s), reptile(s), tortoise(s) and turtle(s).

NOTE: Do not turn your amphibian(s), reptile(s), tortoise(s) or turtle(s) loose. If they are not native to the area, they can harm the species that are. They may not be able to find the food they need to survive either.

Transporting Fish

If the aquarium or bowl your fish normally lives in is too large to move and put in a car, then you will need to have a smaller, more manageable container. Make sure it is still large enough though for the fish to comfortably live in while evacuated. Remove all of the decorative objects from your tank. They can move around when the car is moving and injure the fish. Plants are okay to take. Do not dump a larger than normal amount of food in the container before you leave. The fish could overeat, and this can kill them.

The three things to do to keep your fish alive while evacuated include properly maintaining the correct temperature, water chemistry and aeration. When filling up the transport container, fill it 1/3 full. Put something large enough over the top to prevent water from splashing out or the fish jumping out. You need to keep the water aerated, so bring your air pump and hose. If you don't have access to electricity where you will be staying, purchase and bring with you a battery powered air pump designed for aquariums. Don't forget the hose and aerator stones.

If you don't have electricity you will not be able to use the tank heater. If it is cold, you can cover the tank with towels or a blanket to keep the water warmer.

Keep the container out of direct sunlight once you get to where you will be staying. An added light source is not necessary. The darker it is in the container the less active the fish will be.

NOTE: Do not dump your fish down the toilet or in a lake, pond or river if you are not evacuating them. If they are not native to the area, they can harm the species that are.

Transporting Poultry

The size of your transport cage(s) and number will depend on how many birds you have. You can put multiple birds in the same cage, but you may have to separate roosters if they are not friendly or chicks/ducklings if they are too small.

Once you get to a safe location, the birds cannot stay in the cages for long if there are multiple birds inside. This is why planning is important. Who do you know, outside your immediate area that could house your chickens in a pen or coop. If you know someone, make plans now. Otherwise, find emergency evacuation shelter information on-line or listen for public service announcements to learn where large animals, including poultry, are being housed.

When transporting chickens and ducks be mindful of the temperature. Do not put them in direct sun and if they can be somewhere so they get some breeze that would be best. If it is really hot, you can spray them with water. Be sure to attach a water dish on the inside of the cage(s). Don't worry about food until you get them resettled.

Transporting Large Animals

Large animals requires more planning, and time to transport. You can't just grab your goats and put them in the back seat of your car and go. If you do not have a truck and/or a horse/stock trailer, you need to explore your options and the time to do that is not when an evacuation has been ordered.

First, you have to determine how many large animals you have that will have to be transported in a trailer. Another consideration is that you may not be able to mix different species or even multiple animals of the species in the same load. The more animals you put into a trailer, especially if there is not a way to secure them, you run the risk of animals getting injured. But then you weigh that against leaving them behind to face the disaster alone, and the risk of getting hurt seems less serious.

Now figure out how much trailer space you will need, keeping in mind you may have to separate animals. How many trailers will be needed and what size do they need to be? Other types of trailers, such as a flat bed, can be used, as long as the animals can be put into secure cages and strapped to the trailer. Load these animals last and keep the trailer out of direct sun. It's important to get to where you will be housing large animals as quickly as possible and get them resettled. Be sure to provide drinking water and if necessary, spray the animals with water to cool them down.

If you don't have a pre-determined place to take your large animals, then get on-line or listen to public service announcements to find out where large animal emergency evacuation shelters are being set up.

NOTE: Once a Mandatory Evacuation Order is issued, you cannot pass through the roadblocks to return to your home to get any animals that are still there. So, to be safe, get all your animals out in one trip and if this requires getting additional help, ask for it as soon as possible. Don't take any chances!

If you find you have done everything possible and still cannot evacuate some or all of your animals, then turn them loose so they have a fighting chance of surviving. Do not leave them in a confined space. Put out food and fill multiple containers of water, which is really important for them to survive.

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