

Remember Dogs in Your Evacuation Plans

Residents should remember to plan for their dog's evacuation during emergencies.

October 20, 2005 As Hurricane Wilma approaches Florida, animal welfare organization Noahs Wish said residents should remember to include pets in emergency evacuation plans.

We are issuing an urgent appeal to Florida residents to learn from the lessons of Katrina and do not leave your pets behind, said Terri Crisp, founder and director of Noahs Wish. Its been seven weeks since Katrina hit and there are still over 700 animals in our care who have not been claimed by their owners. Noahs Wish is urging Florida residents to keep a close watch on the projected path of Wilma, and if evacuation is needed, take precautions to keep their pets safe.

The organization said it offers the following guidelines for pet owners in Florida: Do not leave pets behind in the event of an evacuation. They may become lost, injured or worse. Shelters do not always allow pets, so have an emergency plan in place before a storm hits. Find pet-friendly accommodations outside the storm path, or contact animal shelters and kennels, which can provide tips on where to safely shelter pets. Monitor local television and radio stations for information on shelters allowing evacuees to bring pets. Transport pets in a safe and secure carrier. Always keep dogs on a collar and leash, even if they don't normally wear one. Bring a supply of pet food and any medication your pet may need.

If there is no other option than to leave your dog behind, Noahs Wish recommended these steps: Leave several days supply of food and water. Make sure your pet has a collar with up-to-date identification. Include a contact number of a friend or family member who can be reached in an area outside the impact zone. Leave a large notice on the front door, alerting rescue teams that there are animals in the house. Never leave an animal chained or confined. Leave animals loose so they have a chance to get to safety.