

Caring for Your Horse in an Emergency

Be prepared. Horses are large, flighty animals that require extra planning and care.

- **Good general health management** will help your horse weather an emergency. Have your horse vaccinated (tetanus, encephalitis, strangles, West Nile) and tested for EIA every year.
- Keep copies of your **records** in your vehicle, first aid kit and barn. If your horse needs to be relocated, shelters will require health and vaccination records.
- Keep a **photograph** of you with your horse, showing distinguishing characteristics, with your registration papers and/or bill of sale. These will enable you to claim your horse if it runs away.
- **Learn** to take your horse's pulse, respiration and temperature. Learn how to blind fold, twitch, hobble or otherwise restrain a horse. In an emergency, these techniques may be important.
- Assemble (and keep up-to-date) simple first aid and emergency kits that include:
 - **First Aid Kit** – thermometer, surgical scrub, gloves, flashlight, stethoscope, syringe, gauze pads, cotton roll, cling wrap (vet wrap), adhesive wrap, and sharp scissors, veterinarian's phone number, copy of veterinary records
 - **Emergency Kit** – matches, whistle, batteries, weather radio, compass, flares, feed, water, dust mask, moist towelettes, wrench/pliers, can opener, duct tape, garbage bags
- **Network** regularly with equine groups and barns where you could **board** your horse in an emergency. Identify alternate routes to the facility in case of road closures. If you do not own a horse trailer or truck, you will have to rely on others to **transport** your animals. Network with other owners in the area and know how you will evacuate your horse.
- **Practice** loading and transporting your horse with the trailer, to ensure speedy evacuation.

If an emergency warning is issued:

- **Stay calm.** Animals can sense fear and anxiety.
- **Do not wait to move your animals,** start early as conditions may worsen. In an evacuation, contact barns about relocating your horse. Be sure to get directions, alternate routes and a list of supplies to bring. If you have trouble, contact the Cooperative Extension Office, Humane Society or your county emergency operations center for help. Arrange for transportation. If you have a trailer get it hooked up or contact someone to trailer your horse.
- **Gather supplies,** including your first aid and emergency kits, medications, extra halters, lead ropes, blankets, portable fencing, buckets and hay. A horse's digestive system cannot handle a change in diet- take 5 to 7 days supply of horse feed.
- **Secure your barn** and supplies. Turn off the water and electricity. Remove or hang expensive tack. Elevate hay and feed- discard any that get wet. Board up as needed.
- If you are ordered to evacuate and must leave your horse behind, you will need to use your best judgment on pasture turn-out or confinement in the stall, based on the type of disaster and the condition of the barn. Be sure adequate water is available. If you decide to turn out, the horses should be in permanent fencing without wires. Attach some type of i.d. tags to their halters.

Where to get more information about Caring for Your Horse in an Emergency:

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov

Humane Society of the United States – search disaster

www.hsus.org

Call Maryland Cooperative Extension at 301-314-2805 or 301-405-7992

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