



Berkeley CERT

El Niño Pet Preparedness Guide

Keep your pets safe during El Niño with these tips!

1. Identify and Vaccinate Your Pets

Both you and your pets will be much happier if you can get back together quickly in case of separation!

- Make sure your pets each have a collar and tag with with **your** name, phone numbers, email, and home addresses on it. Your name and best phone number are the most important information.
- Have your pets microchipped and keep the microchip information up-to-date. These steps are especially important for cats who refuse to wear a collar and ID tag. Call your local veterinarian, or the Berkeley animal shelter at (510) 981-6600, for more information about microchipping.
- Make sure your pets' vaccinations are up-to-date. Keep a paper copy of their vet records with your emergency supplies. If you have to board your pet or go to an emergency pet shelter, the records may be necessary.

2. Set up a Buddy System

Plan in advance with a neighbor to give your pets short-term care, in case of trouble while you're away from home and/or in case you can't get home as planned.

- Trade phone numbers and email addresses so you can stay in touch.
- Make sure they have a key or other access to your home.
- Give this person a signed letter authorizing emergency veterinary care for your pets. An example can be found here: <http://www.anapsid.org/acd/pet-limitedpoa.pdf>

3. Be Prepared to Evacuate

- **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND** if you have to evacuate. If evacuation is recommended or mandated for your area, do not wait and see. Leave as soon as you can and take your pets with you.
- Prepare in advance a pet disaster "go kit" including food, water, and medication for a minimum of 7 days, bedding, leashes (for dogs) and/or carrier (for cats and small dogs), bags to collect pet waste, and, for cats, a litter pan and litter. Add the pet disaster kit to the supplies you have for the human members of your household.



- Plan for pet-friendly housing in advance. Most emergency shelters for humans do not take pets. Identify motels or friends and family who may be able to take you in along with your pet.
- Service dogs and mini-horses as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are allowed in Red Cross Shelters. If you have an emotional support animal or you have a service animal who is not a dog or mini-horse, you need to be prepared to have your animal turned away at shelters.

4. Be Ready to Stay Home without Power and/or Water

- Prepare a pet disaster “go kit” as described under #3.
- Make sure cats do not have access to uncovered heating ducts, holes in drywall, missing ceiling tiles, chimneys, or other unsafe “hidey-holes” to which they might be bolt if unusually stressed.

5. Keep Pets Close During Storms

Bring pets inside before a storm begins. Pets who become frightened by unusual weather may become impossible to catch even if they normally come when called.

Do not allow pets outside except on leash. Pets who are normally obedient homebodies may behave abnormally in stressful conditions.

- Keep pets far away from any downed power lines.
- Do not allow your pets to drink or come into contact with flood water. Flood waters contaminated with toxins may pool on the ground.
- Keep pets away from wildlife. Unexpected wild animals may turn up in new places due to high water.
- If you have a securely enclosed yard, be sure the fencing is intact and the ground is clear of hazards before you let an indoor dog outside. Do not let indoor/outdoor cats outside even if they usually stay in the yard.

6. El Niño Care for Outdoor-only/feral/community cats

- Consider bringing any tame outdoor cats into a garage or laundry room or similar, even if you don’t usually do so. Being outside in unusually bad weather will be stressful, even with a shelter.
- For cats who can’t be brought inside, make sure shelters are not leaking and are raised above ground level to avoid flooding. For information on making low-cost winter cat shelters, see <http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/spayneuter-feral-cats/winter-shelter-bins-community-cats-faq>>
- Make sure outdoor feeding stations are elevated to avoid flooding. For tips, see <http://www.alleycat.org/WinterWeather>



- Make sure all outdoor cats are spayed or neutered. Kittens born into severe weather conditions will suffer along with mother cats trying to care for them. For more information about nearby low-cost spay/neuter, for both feral and pet cats, see <http://fixourferals.org/home/>

7. El Niño Care for Outdoor-only dogs

- Consider bringing outdoor dogs into a garage or laundry room or similar, even if you don't usually do so. Being outside in unusually bad weather will be stressful, even with a doghouse.
- For dogs who can't be brought inside, make sure doghouses are not leaking and are raised above ground level to avoid flooding. The shelter must have a floor, a roof, and at least three sides. The other requirements for a dog house can be found in City of Berkeley Municipal Code section 10.04.140: < <http://codepublishing.com/ca/berkeley/html/Berkeley10/Berkeley1004/Berkeley1004140.html#10.04.140>> If you want to make sure your dog's shelter is adequate, contact the shelter at (510) 981-6600 for advice.

This document was created by Berkeley CERT volunteers, with special thanks to Emily King Colwell. Learn more about free trainings and other opportunities to get involved with Berkeley CERT here: <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/CERT/>