

EQUINE Emergency Preparedness



UC DAVIS
VETERINARY MEDICINE
Center for Equine Health



Develop Your Individual DISASTER PLAN

Animal owners, and especially owners of horses and livestock, must rely on themselves to take care of their animals in a disaster. Make sure your emergency plan includes the following 10 points:

1 ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

Permanent identification, such as a microchip, is the best way to be reunited with your horse if you become separated during a disaster. Contact your veterinarian to have your horse(s) microchipped, send in the registration paperwork, and update your information regularly. **Visible identification** is also useful. Humane methods of identification include an ID tag attached to the halter, an engraved or marked plastic neckband or leg band, livestock chalk or paint, tags braided into the mane, and contact information written in marker on the hooves. Take several full-frame and close-up photographs with detailed descriptions for each horse that you own. Record breed, color, size, markings, scars, cowlicks or whorls, and other significant features. Store digital copies on a cloud server and keep hard copies in a sealed plastic bag in a safe place.



2 HALTERS AND LEAD ROPES

Keep **halters and lead ropes** ready and easily accessible. Attach a luggage tag to each halter with the horse's name, your name, telephone number, email address, and an alternate emergency telephone number where someone can be reached.

3 MEDICAL RECORDS AND PHOTOS

Store **copies** of your horse's Coggins tests, vaccination records, and any other medical information, along with identification photographs and vital information such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers in a watertight plastic bag. Store the bag with other important papers in a safe place that will be easy for you to access and take with you when you evacuate. Keep a small supply of medications and supplements ready to go in case of evacuation. Check these supplies at least once every 3 months to make sure they are not close to expiring.

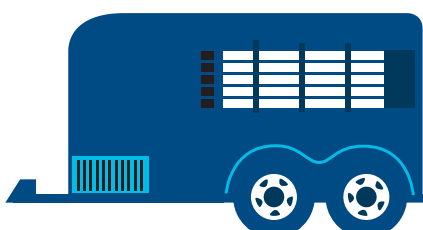
4 LOADING AND UNLOADING

Horses must be comfortable loading in trailers and unloading in potentially unfamiliar surroundings. The stress of evacuation will only add to any existing loading issues. Train your horses to load and unload, or have them trained. **Perform evacuation drills** with your horse(s) and any other backyard and household animals at least 3 times a year. Horses that will not load may have to be left behind. Practice makes evacuation less stressful for everyone!



5 TRANSPORTATION

If you have your own horse trailer, keep it road ready by checking the tires, floors and hitch frequently. Make sure your towing vehicle is in good working order and that the gas tank is at least half-full. If you do not have a horse trailer, make arrangements to have your horse trailered in an emergency. If possible, have several reliable people who can help with transportation.



6 EVACUATION SITES/ EMERGENCY SHELTERS/REFUGE

Know where you can take horses in an emergency evacuation (such as local fairgrounds). Identify at least 2 exit routes and a prearranged destination. Contact your local animal control agency or emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area. The Office of Emergency Services will identify shelter sites for animals during emergency evacuations.



7 BACKUP PLAN

Have a backup plan in case it is impossible to take your horse with you when you evacuate. Consider the different types of disasters and assess whether your horses would be better off in a barn or loose in a field. Your local humane organization or emergency management agency can provide information about your community's disaster response plans. For fire hazards, create defensible space around your horse's enclosure. Designate and maintain a shelter-in-place area for animals that cannot be evacuated.



8 COMMUNICATE YOUR PLAN

Share your evacuation plans with friends and neighbors. Post detailed instructions in several places – including the barn office, tack room, trailer, and barn entrances. This will help ensure that emergency workers can see them in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself.

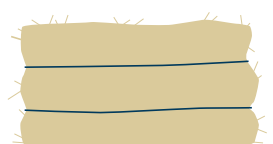


9 EVACUATE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER

Evacuate early – even before there is an official evacuation order. If you wait until the last minute to evacuate, emergency management officials may tell you that you must leave your horses behind. If this happens, your horses could potentially be unattended for days without care, food, or water.

10 SUPPLIES

Have 72 hours' worth of fresh water, hay, and any other feed that your horse receives regularly on hand. Minimizing dietary changes decreases stress and risk of colic. Pack water buckets and a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible. Prepare an emergency kit that includes a tarp or canvas, leg wraps, knife, scissors, and wire cutters.



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