

Horse Evacuation Tips

- ▶ Make arrangements in advance to have your horse trailered in case of an emergency. If you do not have your own trailer or do not have enough trailer space for all of your horses, be sure you have several people on standby to help evacuate your horses.
- ▶ Know where you can take your horses in an emergency evacuation. Make arrangements with a friend or another horse owner to stable your horses if needed. Contact your local animal care and control agency, agricultural extension agent, or local emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area.
- ▶ Inform friends and neighbors of your evacuation plans. Post detailed instructions in several places—including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer, and barn entrances—to ensure they are accessible to emergency workers in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself.
- ▶ Place your horses' Coggins tests, veterinary papers, identification photographs, and vital information—such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers (veterinarian, family members, etc.)—in a watertight envelope. Store the envelope with your other important papers in a safe place that can be quickly reached.
- ▶ Keep halters ready for your horses. Each halter should include the following information: the horse's name, your name, your telephone number, and another emergency telephone number where someone can be reached.
- ▶ Prepare a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible.
- ▶ Be sure to have on hand a supply of water, hay, feed, and medications for several days for each horse you are evacuating.



▶ It is very important that your horses are comfortable being loaded onto a trailer. If your horses are unaccustomed to being loaded onto a trailer, practice the procedure so they become used to it.

▶ There may be times when taking your horses with you is impossible during an emergency. So you must consider different types of disasters and whether your horses would be better off in a barn or loose in a field.

Your local humane organization, agricultural extension agent, or local emergency management agency may be able to provide you with information about your community's disaster response plans.

For more information about disaster preparedness, write to Disaster Services, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037; call 202-452-1100; or visit www.humanes.org.

Disaster Preparedness



Promoting
the protection
of all animals

ANIMALS DEPEND ON US
Care Enough to Plan

THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037
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Horses and Disaster

Why Horse Owners Need to Be Prepared

Disaster preparedness is important for all animals, but it takes extra consideration for horses because of their size and the requirements for transporting them. If you think that disasters happen only if you live in a floodplain, near an earthquake fault line, or in a coastal area, you may be tragically mistaken. Disasters can happen anywhere and include barn fires, hazardous materials spills, propane line explosions, and train derailments, all of which may necessitate evacuation. It is imperative that you are prepared to move your horses to a safe area. During an emergency, the time you have to evacuate your horses will be limited. With an effective emergency plan, you may have enough time to move your horses to safety. If you are unprepared or wait until the last minute to evacuate, you could be told by emergency management officials that you must leave your horses behind. Once you leave your property, you have no way of knowing how long you will be kept out of the area. If left behind, your horses could be unattended for days without care, food, or water. To help you avoid this situation, we have prepared information and suggestions to help you plan for emergencies.



Barn Fires

The Leading Disaster for Horse Owners

Preventing barn fires and being prepared in the event of a fire can mean the difference between life and death for your horses. Knowledge of the danger of fires and how to deal with them are of the greatest importance and should be an ongoing concern to horse owners.

FIRE PREVENTION IS KEY

- ▶ Prohibit smoking in or around the barn. A discarded cigarette can ignite dry bedding or hay in seconds.
- ▶ Avoid parking tractors and vehicles in or near the barn. Engine heat and backfires can spark a flame. Also store other machinery and flammable materials outside of the barn.
- ▶ Inspect electrical systems regularly and immediately correct any problems. Rodents can chew on electrical wiring and cause damage that quickly becomes a fire hazard.
- ▶ Keep appliances to a minimum in the barn. Use stall fans, space heaters, and radios only when someone is in the barn.
- ▶ Be sure hay is dry before storing it. Hay that is too moist may spontaneously combust. Store hay outside of the barn in a dry, covered area when possible.

BE PREPARED FOR A BARN FIRE—IT CAN SAVE YOUR HORSE'S LIFE

- ▶ Keep aisles, stall doors, and barn doors free of debris and equipment.
- ▶ Mount fire extinguishers around the stable, especially at all entrances.
- ▶ Have a planned evacuation route for every stall in the barn. Familiarize employees and horse handlers with your evacuation plans.

- ▶ Post emergency telephone numbers at each telephone and at each entrance. Emergency telephone numbers should include those of the barn manager, veterinarian, emergency response, and other qualified horse handlers. Also keep your barn's street address clearly posted to relay to the 911 operator or your community's emergency services.

- ▶ Be sure your address and the entrance to your property are clearly visible from the main road.
- ▶ Consider installing smoke alarms and heat detectors throughout the barn. New heat sensors can detect rapidly changing temperatures in your barn. The heat sensors should be hooked up to sirens that will quickly alert you and your neighbors to a possible barn fire.
- ▶ Host an open house for emergency services personnel in your area to familiarize them with the layout of your property. Provide them with tips on horse handling or present a miniseminar with hands-on training for horse handling.
- ▶ Familiarize your horses with emergency procedures and common activities they would encounter during a disaster. Try to desensitize them to flashlights and flashing lights.



IN THE EVENT OF A BARN FIRE

- ▶ Immediately call 911 or your local emergency services. Keep that number clearly posted.
- ▶ Do not enter the barn if it is already engulfed in flames.
- ▶ If it is safe for you to enter the barn, evacuate horses one at a time starting with the most accessible horses. Be sure to put a halter and lead rope on each horse when you open the stall door. Be aware that horses tend to run back into burning barns out of fear and confusion.
- ▶ Blindfold horses only if absolutely necessary. Many horses will balk at a blindfold, making evacuation more difficult and time consuming.
- ▶ Move your horses to paddocks close enough to reach quickly but far enough from the barn that the horses will not be affected by the fire and smoke. Never let horses loose in an area where they are able to return to the barn.
- ▶ After the fire, be sure to have all your horses checked by a veterinarian. Smoke inhalation can cause serious lung damage and respiratory complications. Horses are prone to stress and may colic after a fire.



EQUINE

Emergency Preparedness

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:



The goal of permanent identification for your animals is reunification in the event you become separated during a disaster. Permanently identify each horse by a method such as microchipping. This should be done by a veterinarian and the paperwork sent in to register the identity. NOTE: the microchip is useless without the registration. Other humane methods of identification include an **ID tag** attached to the horse's halter or a plastic **neckband** engraved or marked with information. At the time of evacuation, consider additional temporary identification such as a **leg band**. In a pinch, you can spray paint your name and phone number on the horse.



Also, take several **full-frame** and **close-up photographs** with detailed descriptions for each horse you own. Record breed, color, size, markings, scars, cowlicks or whorls, and other significant features. Keep copies in a sealed plastic ziplock bag and store it in a safe place. Send a copy to a friend or family member so that the information is preserved in case of fire, or keep a copy in digital form on a cloud server for access from a phone or other mobile device.



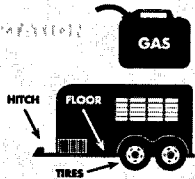
Keep halters and lead ropes ready for your horses. On each halter attach a **luggage tag** with the following information: the horse's name, your name, email address, your telephone number, and another emergency telephone number where someone can be reached.



Place your horses' **Coggins tests**, veterinary papers, identification photographs, and **vital information**—such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers (veterinarian, family members, etc.)—in a **water-tight plastic bag**. Store the bag with your other important papers in a safe place that will be easy for you to access and take with you when you and your horses evacuate. An old backpack makes a useful storage container for "grab and go".



If you have your own horse trailer, keep it road ready by checking the tires, floors and hitch frequently. Make sure your truck is in good working order and that the gas tank is at least half full. If you don't have a horse trailer, make arrangements to have your horse trailered in an emergency. If you can, have several reliable people who could help with transportation in case one person can't help.



It is vital that your horses are comfortable being loaded into and unloaded from a trailer. A stressful situation will only add to any existing loading issues. If your horses have not been trained to load and unload, **train or have them trained** and practice the procedure so they become used to it. A major problem in the San Diego County wildfires were horses (and mules) who were not trailer-trained, making it impossible to transport them to safety. As a result, some were left behind.



Know where you can take your horses in an emergency evacuation. Identify at least two (2) exit routes and a **prearranged destination**. If possible, make arrangements with a friend or another horse owner to stable your horses in a safe zone. Contact your local animal control agency or local emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area. During mandatory evacuations, shelter sites for animals will be identified by the Office of Emergency Services.



Have a back-up plan in case it's impossible to take your horse with you when you evacuate. Consider different types of disasters and whether your horses would be better off in a **barn or loose in a field**. Your local humane organization or emergency management agency should be able to provide you with information about your community's disaster response plans.



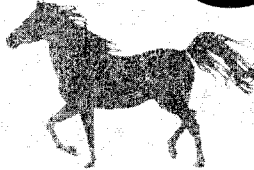
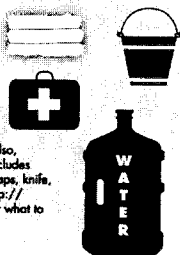
Share your evacuation plans with friends and neighbors. Post **detailed instructions** in several places—including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer, and barn entrances—to ensure emergency workers can see them in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself.



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. In this case, your horses could be unattended for days without care, food, or water.



Have fresh water and hay available for **72 hours**. Don't forget the water buckets. Prepare a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible to bring with you for your horses. Also, prepare an emergency kit that includes water buckets, tarpaulins, leg wraps, knife, scissors and wire cutters. (See <http://cal-cares.com/personal-family> for what to include in an emergency kit.)



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