

## Disaster Tips: Horses

Are you prepared to take care of your horse when a disaster strikes? If not, NOW is the time to stock up on the items that you will need so you will not get caught unprepared. Listed below is a handy shopping list for you to use. The next time you buy food or supplies, take this list with you. Don't put off doing what you should do now - it may just make the difference between being able to keep your horse alive when a disaster strikes.

Here are the supplies that you should have in a disaster kit for horses. Adjust the amounts, depending on the number of horses that you have.



- **FOOD**

Since a horse's digestive system is very delicate; you should keep the horse on the same diet it is accustomed to during a disaster.

- Always have a reserve supply of the type of food or special feed your horse is used to eating that would last at least one week;
- Store feed in an airtight, water proof container;
- Rotate feed at least once every (3) months;
- Include with your disaster supplies an extra feeding bucket, just in case the one normally used is lost.

- **WATER**

When the water supply is disrupted during a disaster, it can become a real challenge getting enough water to give to a horse, and dehydration can become a major problem for a horse, especially when it is stressed.

- Have enough drinking water to last at least one week for each horse - 50 gallon barrels are good for this;
- Store water in a cool, dark location, and be sure to rotate it so it remains fresh;
- Remember that if the tap water is not suitable for humans to drink, it is also not suitable for animals to drink
- Include with your disaster supplies an extra water bucket; just in case the one normally used is lost.

- **SANITATION**

Maintaining a clean environment for horses during a disaster will minimize the threat of disease.

- Keep at least a one week supply of shavings to be spread out in the horse's stall (be sure that what you use is dry);
- In your disaster supplies keep a pitch fork in case the one you usually use is lost;
- If space allows, have an extra wheelbarrow or muck bucket which will greatly assist when cleaning a stall

- **IDENTIFICATION**

It is important to have some type of identification on your horse during a disaster which would include such forms of identification as:

Microchipping, tattoos or freeze branding.

If your horse is not permanently identified, there are some options for temporary identification, which include:

- Using a livestock crayon and write your name, phone number, and address on the horse;
- Using clippers to shave your name, address, and phone number in the horse's

coat;

- Braiding into the horse's mane an identification tag with your name, address, and phone number on it;
- Have a spare identification tag with your disaster supplies that you can write on, so that if you are going to be living somewhere temporarily you can put the phone number and address of that location on the tag and braid it into the horse's mane;
- In with your disaster supplies keep some current photographs of your horse, including in some of the pictures the person(s) who own the animal, so that they can be used to prove ownership should your horse get lost and you have to reclaim it;
- In with your disaster supplies include a copy of the Bill of Sale for your horse or other documentation that can be used to prove ownership.

- **FIRST AID KIT**

Check with your veterinarian to find out what he/she recommends you include in your first aid kit. Some suggested items include: cotton and cotton rolls, disposable surgical gloves, vet wraps, duct tape, telfa pads, Betadine, instant cold packs, easy boot, diapers, Furazone, scissors, Blue Lotion, and tweezers.

- **MEDICATIONS**

- If your horse is on long term medication, always have on hand at least a (2) week supply, since your vet may not be able to refill a prescription for awhile;
- Check with your veterinarian, preferably a mobile veterinarian, to see if he/she has a disaster plan - if not, find a veterinarian in your area who does so that you can get medical care for your horse should it get injured during a disaster;
- Keep your horse's medical records, including records of vaccinations, with your disaster supplies;
- It is important to keep your horse up-to-date on vaccinations, especially tetanus as the risk of getting cut during a disaster greatly increases;
- Keep with your disaster supplies a current copy of your horse's Coggins certificate.

- **EVACUATING YOUR HORSE**

In case you have to evacuate your horse, you should have a horse trailer and a truck that can safely pull it, but be sure to maintain the trailer so that it is safe to pull - a safety check includes looking at:

- the floor of the trailer the trailer hitch
- the tires
- the lights

If you do not have a trailer or enough trailer space for the number of horses that you have, then work out ahead of time other arrangements for transporting your horse(s).

- **TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR HORSES**

If you have to evacuate your horse, you may not have a barn with stalls to take it to, so in that case, you should have rope in your disaster supplies to use to tie out your horse (you must train your horse to tether before you have to do this in a disaster though.) In with your disaster supplies you should have a halter and lead rope for each of your horses and it is best to have leather halters and cotton lead ropes and not nylon, so that in the event of a fire they will not melt.

With horses and other large animals, it is especially important to make arrangements

ahead of time as to where they can be sheltered if you need to evacuate them. Some suggestions for temporary housing include equine centers, boarding stables, racetracks, and fairgrounds. It is a good idea to have a community evacuation plan if there are lots of horses in the area where you live. Setting up a "buddy" system can help to save the life of your horse too.

It takes time to move larger animals, so allow plenty of time to get them to safety. Do not wait until the last minute. If you have a horse that is not accustomed to being in a trailer, practice loading and unloading with the horse. During the emergency is not the time to convince a horse who has never been in a trailer to go inside one.