

## **Hurricane Preparedness for Pet Owners**

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The prediction for 2007 is for an active hurricane season, with a likely range of 13-16 named storms, 7-9 hurricanes, and 3-5 major hurricanes (source: the National Weather Service. See [www.cpc.noaa.gov/](http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/) for detailed information). Pender County residents know from experience that even a weak hurricane can cause havoc due to flooding, downed trees and power outages.

In planning for hurricanes, don't forget to create a plan for your pet. Have an identification tag made that your pet can wear on a harness or collar, and consider having your pet micro chipped. This painless procedure implants a small chip in the pet that allows for permanent means of identification. Many animal shelters and some veterinarians have chip readers that so that your contact information to be retrieved from the chip, should your pet get lost. There are different micro chip programs, ask your veterinarian for more information.

It is also a good idea to create a pet care kit that you can quickly place in your vehicle, should it become necessary to evacuate.

Your emergency kit should include:

- Vaccination records
- Current photographs of each pet, with identifying information and your contact information written on the back
- A two week supply of any prescription drug your pet needs
- A two week supply of pet food

- Suitable crate or wire cage for each pet; hotels that do not normally allow pets *may* allow your pet if you can show that you can keep it confined
- Collar or harness and leash
- Food and water bowls
- Litter box and litter
- Blanket or pet bed
- Clean-up kit including paper towels, garbage bags, and disinfectant spray

Be aware that Pender County emergency shelters cannot accept pets for sanitation and safety reasons. This highlights the fact that the most important part of preparing for a possible evacuation is creating a plan that includes at least one pet-friendly destination. This might be a relative or friend who lives inland, or a hotel that accepts pets. Another alternative is to board your pet(s) at a kennel or veterinarian's office, but keep in mind they will fill quickly. Research your options and make a plan before the emergency strikes.