

PROTECT YOUR PET: JUNE IS NATIONAL PET PREPAREDNESS MONTH

With temperatures rising and the official start of summer later this month, many of you will be heading out of town for some rest and relaxation. But you need to remember that if a disaster was to occur either here on West Point or while you are away for the summer, your pets need you more than ever. Just as you've prepared READY "emergency" kits for yourself and your family, you should also build a READY kit for your favorite furry (or perhaps hairless) friend. In honor of National Pet Preparedness Month, we have compiled a list of suggested items to include in your pet preparedness kit. Talking about pet preparedness and assembling a pet READY "preparedness" kit can be a great way to introduce kids to preparedness.

Consider including the following in your West Point READY kit:

- * Food and water
- * Bowls and a manual can opener (if using canned food)
- * Leash, collar, harness, and/or a pet carrier in which your pet can stand up and turn around
- * Medications, medical records, and a first aid kit
- * Immunization and veterinary records (update as needed)
- * Sanitation materials such as a litter box and associated supplies and/or plastic bags
- * Photo/description of your pet and a photo of you with your pet
- * Documentation of feeding schedule, medical concerns, and other relevant information in case the animal needs to be boarded
- * Evacuation information, including a list of pet-friendly hotels or shelters, veterinarian contact information, and contact information for out-of-town family or friends
- * If possible: toys, grooming supplies, pet bed

If you are a pet owner, being prepared and having a plan for your pet can save their lives.

It is recommended using a rescue sticker alert (available from the ASPCA website) to inform emergency response workers that you have pets inside your home. On the sticker include the types and number of pets in your household along with your veterinarian's phone number. Also if you evacuate with your pet and time allows, write "EVACUATED" across the sticker so rescue workers don't waste time looking for them.

Check out the following websites for further information:

- FEMA's Caring for Animals page: <https://www.ready.gov/animals>
- American Humane Association's Pet Preparedness Month page: <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/emergency-services/pet-preparedness-month.html>
- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Disaster Preparedness <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/disaster-preparedness>

If or when a disaster strikes, think of your pet looking at you with their eyes saying simply: "What About Me"