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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**National Pet Preparedness Month**

*by*

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June is National Pet Preparedness Month—which is all about preparing an emergency plan that includes your pet. They are important members of the family!

Here's how to prepare for a disaster or unexpected situation with your pet in mind. This plan will help in case you need to evacuate your area, there is a bad storm, or you're forced to deviate from your normal schedule.

- First, think about where you can stay with your pet in case of evacuation. Many hotels and shelters do not allow pets, so having a place pre-picked will make your evacuation smoother and easier on everyone. Have a backup plan in case you can't take your pet with you. Do you have a neighbor or friend to step in for you?
- Always keep copies of your pets' vaccine records and microchip information. If your pet is not microchipped, consider getting that done so if you get separated from your pet it will be easier to reunite with them.
- You should have an emergency kit for your pet that includes essential items and is easy to grab. The kit should include food (kept in an airtight waterproof container), water, and a few non-breakable food dishes. If your pet is on any medication, make sure you have a least a week supply of it in the kit, in case your vet office closes due to evacuation or other emergency. You should also keep a back up collar and leash for each pet, a traveling crate if warranted, and any sanitation items, like litter. Finally, you should include some favorite toys, as familiar items will help reduce stress.
- It is also a good idea to have a first aid kit just for your pet. Nail trimmers, basic bandage materials, gauze, a muzzle, and a syringe for flushing wounds are just a few things you should keep in it. You should contact a veterinarian as soon as possible if you need to use the kit but having some basic materials can help keep your pet alive while waiting to get to a veterinary hospital.

- Lastly, remember to keep an eye on local and national weather, so you can follow all recommended instructions!

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*Dr. Forbes is a veterinarian at Mountain View Animal Hospital in Essex Junction, VT. The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA) is a professional organization of 380 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.*