



PREPARING YOUR PET FOR Storm Season

A guide to how you can ensure your animals are kept safe this storm season.

Many pounds report an increase in runaway cats and dogs after a storm and Animal Welfare League Queensland often sees a significant influx of lost animals coming into care when severe weather events occur.

Pets are at higher risk of becoming lost during a storm. The sudden atmospheric changes and loud noises associated with storms is one of the most prevalent phobias in animals and result in many of them digging under or jumping over fences to escape from their properties and get away from the storm. This then puts them at risk of injuring themselves.

While there is no magic solution to prevent animals from becoming distressed during storms, there are several things you can do to calm and protect your pets.

Tips for keeping your pet safe during a storm

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm – animals can become disoriented or try to escape the property to get away from the storm.
- If you are not able to be home – ask a neighbour or family member to take care of your pet in the event you are unable to do so.
- Storm phobic animals – confine them to a small space or room if you know this makes them feel safe, close the blinds so your pet can't see outside and have music playing. You can also try a thunder coat.
- Make sure all pets have identification – ensure your pet's microchip details are up-to-date and they are wearing a collar and identification tag. If you aren't sure which company your pet's microchip is registered with, visit petaddress.com.au to search your pet's microchip.
- Take your pet if you evacuate – if it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for your pets. You have no way of knowing how long you'll be kept out of the area, and you may not be able or allowed to go back for your pets.

Tips for keeping your pet safe after a storm

- Don't allow your pets to roam outside straight away – there could be damage to the property, a lot of debris in your property or your fencing may be damaged.
- Be patient with your pets after a storm disaster – if your pet is distressed during a storm it may take them sometime calm down and get back into their normal routine.
- If your property has been flooded – check for wildlife that may have sought refuge there as they can pose a threat to your pet.

Losing a pet is a very distressing time for owners. In the event your pet does go missing during a storm, check your neighbourhood as someone may have found your pet and are keeping them safe. Ensure you contact your local Council, animal shelters and vet clinics. It is also a good idea to list your pet missing on social media lost and found pages.

Lost cats and dogs behave differently depending on whether they are shy or confident, whether kept indoors or are used to being outside and many other factors. Animal Welfare League Queensland developed a variety of resources to assist you during this time - visit awlqld.com.au for more information. These provide the essential steps to help you find your lost cat or dog and to help you find the owners of lost pets.

Most importantly, don't give up – cats are often found weeks or months after they go missing.

This is also a very timely reminder for pet owners to make sure you have an emergency plan in place for your pets during a natural disaster - visit qld.gov.au/emergency to create your plan.



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