

Emergency Preparedness for Rabbits

The following items are recommended for inclusion in a disaster kit specifically for rabbits. Prepare one kit for each rabbit in your household.



- One-month supply pellets
- Two-week supply of water
- Proof of vaccinations
- Medication
- First aid kit
- Microchip your rabbit
- Proof of ownership (picture of your entire family members with animal, different angles)
- Lost pet poster (prepared in advance as your access to working photocopy machines may be slightly challenged during a crisis)
- Paper maps - know where to go
- Emergency phone numbers (out of state contact)
- Food and water
- Litter and litter box
- Hard portable crate and its normal contents (replenishment for seven days)
- Trash bags
- Food dish and water dish
- Toys or something to keep the pet busy
- Soap/shampoo in case your rabbit is exposed to flood waters or anything dirty that could compromise its health
- Collar with ID Tag (with updated cell phone and/or emergency contact info)

1. FOOD:

A rabbit's digestive system is very sensitive to stress. During a disaster, you should keep your rabbit's diet as normal as possible. You should have at least 2 weeks supply of high quality rabbit pellets at all times. Keep pellets in an airtight, waterproof container, and rotate the pellets at least once every 2 months. You can store the pellets in airtight containers in the freezer, but if you do make sure to include a large sign that says "FREEZER" in your emergency supplies so they are not forgotten during an evacuation. Include a food bowl. Realize that fresh vegetables may not be available during a disaster.

2. HAY:

Good quality grass hay is essential to a rabbit's diet. Having a steady supply during a disaster will help keep your rabbit's digestive system functioning properly. An airtight, waterproof container holding at least 2 weeks worth of hay should be available. NOTE: The hay container should ONLY be sealed for transport during a disaster. Hay kept in a sealed container for any length of time will mold and cause health problems if eaten by your rabbit. Store the hay in the container but keep it unsealed, and be sure to rotate the hay once every 2 months.

3. WATER:

In a cool, dry place, store a 2-week supply of water in a plastic container. Rotate water at least once every 2 months. Include a water bottle or bowl, depending on your rabbit's preference.

4. SANITATION AND CLEANING SUPPLIES:

Include a small litterbox and enough litter to last 2 weeks. A small container of dish soap to clean water and food bowls, some paper towels, some plastic bags, and a litterbox and cage cleanser.

5. EVACUATION CAGE AND HOUSING:

Have assembled and ready to go a carrier to evacuate each rabbit in your household. Also have a carrier or other traveling cage to house your rabbit if you must be away from home for an extended period. Have a temporary cage large enough for a litterbox. Some of the larger carriers will work, and collapsible dog crates come in all sizes and work well for rabbits. Have a towel or other cover for the cage or carrier so your rabbit has a chance to feel secure and calm and will be protected from intrusion by other animals or people. If you are housing your rabbit indoors at a secure, safe location (such as a friend's house), you may consider a collapsible exercise pen. Use only if your rabbit will not jump out of the pen and only if no other animals can get into the pen. If you are unsure in any way about the safety and security of your location, use an exercise pen only for supervised exercise periods.

6. FIRST AID KIT

A basic first aid kit may contain Betadine solution for cleaning and disinfecting, antibiotic ointment, tweezers, scissors, cotton swabs, Simethicone, Pedialyte, oral syringes, Critical Care or vegetable baby food for force feeding if necessary (be sure to rotate your supply of baby food to keep it fresh), and a digital thermometer. A first aid book for rabbits.

7. PROTECTING YOUR RABBIT FROM HEAT STROKE

Rabbits are very prone to heat stroke. If you need to evacuate when the temperature is above 90 degrees F, you'll need a way to keep your rabbit cool. Provide shade by covering part of his/her enclosure with a towel. Freeze 1- or 2-liter bottles of water to take with you when you evacuate. Pack a couple watertight containers that can be filled with ice. Some ice can also be placed in your rabbit's water bowl. You can also dampen your rabbit's ears and body with cool water (do not soak your rabbit or dunk his/her ears in cold water) and fan him/her. If you have access to electricity and a fan, dampen the towel over his/her cage and let the fan blow through the towel.

8. MEDICATIONS

If your rabbit is on long-term medication, have on hand a 2-week supply, since your vet may not be able to fill a prescription right away. Keep your rabbit's medical records with your disaster supplies.

9. PHOTOS & IDENTIFICATION

Pack current photos of your rabbit in case he or she is lost during the disaster. Include yourself in some of the photos in case you must show proof of guardianship. Consider having your rabbit microchipped - if it hasn't been already - so that he or she can be identified.

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