

PET PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION

When planning for possible crises, it helps to think of your pets as small children. Your animal loved ones depend on you for their safety and well-being. In a wildfire or other emergency—with unfamiliar smells, panicked humans, and scenes of chaos—pets may quickly become stressed, have difficulty breathing, overheat, or behave erratically.

Be their best friend—have a plan!

EVACUATION: The PET SAFETY Pyramid

When in doubt—*get out!*

In a wildfire or similar emergency, the best thing you can do for animals is take them out of Topanga as quickly as possible. *Anywhere outside the Canyon will be safer than anywhere inside.* In a fire, be ready to leave as soon as you get an evacuation warning; don't wait for the evacuation order, or you may get stuck in traffic trying to escape. *(This applies to anyone responsible for children, pets, or dependents with special needs.)* Taking your pets to a calm, safe environment is the best solution, both for their well-being and for your peace of mind. Be sure you have a plan about where you're going and have ready everything that needs to go with you.

I can't get out of Topanga in time: now what?

Grab your *Topanga Disaster Survival Guide* and go to the nearest current Community Safety Area (CSA), also listed at topangasurvival.org. If you don't have a pet cage or other suitable restraint for your pets, they will have to stay in your car—so bring your pet disaster kit! You are responsible for supervising your pets and taking care of all their needs. If you can't get to a CSA, go to a current Neighborhood Survival Area (NSA), but it will be less comfortable and less safe.*



Mickey

Home alone.

Firefighters have to protect human lives first. They will not have time, personnel, or equipment to protect your pets. Your animals *may* survive if your house does, but they will be exposed to extreme heat, smoke, and other hazards.

On their own.

Most animals who died in previous fires were left running loose. They were run over by panicked drivers or trapped by flames or died of smoke inhalation. This is the worst-case scenario for animals.



Nosey

*Please note: Pre-designated individual NSAs and CSAs can change. Please check www.topangasurvival.org to verify their current status. NSAs and CSAs will be annually reviewed by the County Fire Department Brush Clearance Unit to confirm their availability.

Home Away from Home: CSAs and NSAs

Bring the following items:

- wire **CAGE** or carrier with good air circulation, along with bedding and cover for sun, rain, ash, etc., and/or sturdy **LEASHES** and harnesses, with a ground mounting device or carabiner for tying pets up temporarily.
- FOOD, WATER** (for several days), bowls, cat litter/pan, pooper scooper, can opener.
- several days' supply of **MEDICATIONS** (including anti-stress remedies) recommended by your vet.
- name and number of your **VETERINARIAN**; info on feeding schedules, vaccination dates, medical and behavioral problems, and any other special issues your pet may have (attach to the cage in a waterproof, chew-resistant bag).
- current **PHOTOS** of you with your pets in case you get separated (in your wallet).
- OUTSIDE CONTACT INFO**: your own, plus someone who can take custody of your pets if you are unable to do so (attach to carrier), as well as an out-of-state contact.
- pet **BEDS AND TOYS**, if easily transportable.

Consult the **Topanga Animal Rescue Web site** for more details:
www.topangaanimalrescue.com

Where can we go?

If you have no friends or family who can shelter your pets, you can take them to a Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control animal shelter. In a disaster, their policy is to keep all pets evacuated to their facilities for at least three weeks, and to make all possible efforts to reunite them with their owners.

Is Your Neighborhood Networked?

You may not be home when a disaster happens, so it's crucial that you have a plan with a neighbor or your neighborhood network for retrieving your pets and their disaster kits.

For more ideas, see pages 27–33 of the Topanga Disaster Survival Guide.

REMEMBER:

Los Angeles County law requires that your dogs be microchipped. Microchipping can save any pet's life if you are separated in an emergency!



Tara

Animals Other Than Cats and Dogs

HORSES and other **LIVESTOCK** (sheep, goats, pigs), as well as **EXOTIC ANIMALS**, are **not permitted at Community Safety Areas or Neighborhood Survival Areas**. It is especially important that you develop your own disaster evacuation plan for them. The Equine Education Team (see Resources, page 30) can help.

BIRDS should be transported in a secure travel cage, with a blanket for cold weather or a plant mister for hot weather. Give them some fruits and vegetables with high water content. Bring extra cage liners and change them frequently. Have leg bands on your birds, and keep a photo in your wallet.

SNAKES can be transported in a pillowcase but must be transferred to more secure housing when you reach the evacuation site. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking, and a heat source. Bring food if they need to eat often. When transporting **HOUSE LIZARDS**, follow the instructions for birds.

SMALL MAMMALS (rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, etc.) and **CHICKENS** should be transported in secure carriers suitable for the animals to live in while they are being sheltered. Take bedding materials, cage liners, food bowls, and water bottles.

After the Disaster

After the crisis has passed, it may be some time before residents are cleared to return to Topanga, so **be prepared for a stay of several days or even a week out of the Canyon.** Keep in mind that even if your house is intact and you are allowed to return, **the area may not yet be safe for your pets!**

Risks after a fire include burned or cut paws, eating or inhaling toxic substances or residues, escaping because of downed fences or other damage, loss of shelter and shade, and a lack of water supply, power supply, and other County services. Many similar risks would be present after an earthquake or other disaster.

Keep in mind that when animals return to a changed landscape, **they will be upset, disoriented, and easily stressed.** Give them as much calm and normalcy as you can, and follow familiar rituals whenever possible.

Often your pet will not show evidence of injury, and even the gentlest may respond defensively. If you suspect that your pets have been injured, protect yourself from bites when touching or moving them. Approach strays with caution, and call Animal Control if aggression is noted. Keep your pets separate from rescued strays, but please take them to an animal shelter so their families can find them. **If your pet is missing,** take photographs and descriptions to local shelters and veterinary clinics, and do not stop looking.



Jade

Resources

The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control Equine Response Team (LACDACCERT)

The nearest location is the Agoura Animal Shelter at 29525 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, 818-991-0071.

If they have the resources, LACDACC will station trucks at the Regional Shelters outside the Canyon to pick up and transport pets that people wish to consign temporarily to their care.

Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (T-CEP) Pets Web Site

www.t-cep.org/pets.htm • hot line: 310-455-3000 • T-CEP Emergency Hotels List: www.t-cep.org/pets/pethotels.htm

(Bear in mind that hotels' policies change; update your own list often, and call in advance to check on availability.)

The Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (T-CEP) is a nonprofit, volunteer organization whose purpose is to help the Topanga community prepare for and cope with disasters such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes.

Equine Education Team

www.etinational.com • www.t-cep.org/pets.htm

Topanga Disaster Survival Guide

www.topangasurvival.org (Download a copy of this information from here.)

Topanga Animal Rescue

***310-455-7268 • rescue@topangaonline.com
www.topangaanimalrescue.com***

Topanga Animal Rescue is a nonprofit organization founded by Susan Clark that has the ability to mobilize a veterinary field triage unit in the event of an emergency as well as provide ongoing animal education outreach programs for the community.

Humane Society of the United States

www.hsus.org