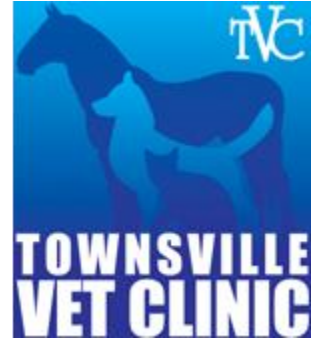


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NORTH QUEENSLAND SPECIALIST EQUINE SERVICE

Preparing your pets for the storm season

While everyone talks about preparing your home for the upcoming storm season it's also important that our pets are storm ready as well. Cyclones, storms and floods can often occur quickly with little notice so it's important to be well prepared.

If you are forced to evacuate, having a prearranged kennel or friend that your pet can stay with outside of the danger zone is very helpful, however often this isn't an option. If you are required to leave your pet home alone, confine them to the safest room in the house, this is usually the bathroom. Leave them with readily accessible food and water in non-spill containers and avoid tying them up if possible as this can lead to injury. This also applies if you are home with your pet. Stay in the safest room and try to keep your pet calm.

Ensure your emergency kit contains a first aid kit, plenty of non-perishable food items, water and non-spill bowls. Ensure all microchip and tag details are up to date with your current address and phone number and keep the vets phone number close at hand. A basic first aid kit should include items such as bandages, gauze swabs, cotton wool, betadine, tweezers, scissors and gloves. If unsure you can always discuss with your vet the best items to place in a first aid kit.

Other items that are essential for preparing your pets for an emergency include;

- Any essential medications
- Collar, harness, lead or covered carry cage
- Litter tray and litter
- Toys, blankets, towels, bedding
- Treats
- Snakes can be transferred to a securely tied pillowcase or sack
- Other reptiles can be moved in small plastic containers with ventilation holes.

Horses can be difficult to prepare for storms. As with household pets a well stocked emergency kit is essential and should also include a knife, wire cutters, rope and halters.

Whether you keep your horse in a stable or loose in the paddock is dependant on the nature of the emergency, risk of debris such as trees falling and the sturdiness of the stall. Either way, adequate identification is required in case your horse goes missing from fallen fences. Keep paperwork with proof of ownership in your emergency kit. Tying luggage tags into the mane and tail or using stock paint to record your phone number and/or address is often the best way to ensure lost horses make their way back to you.

Before the storm begins check the paddock for any hazards such as damaged fences, sharp items and potential projectiles. If you are planning to evacuate your horse, do it well in advance. Moving your horses later in adverse weather can prove dangerous. Try to make sure that your horse is not left in a paddock where there are power lines in case they come down.