



## *The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy*

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### **Member Education**

#### **Emergency Plans**

As part of the duty of care to your cats, it is prudent to plan ahead to ensure their safety and welfare in the event of an emergency.

As we are aware, emergencies can come at any time of year and in a variety of forms – indeed in Victoria in recent times we have seen impacts of natural disasters such as floods, storm damage and bushfires. As such, we all need to be prepared to cope with these emergencies. But emergencies can also occur at any time - they can also come in the form of a personal emergency, such as an unplanned medical emergency that may mean you are away from your home for a period. As we have also seen with COVID, there can also be outside influences that may affect us all, such as lockdown or transport measures restricting not only your own movement but also food or litter availability.

So what you should do for each type of emergency? What you need to do in the event of each type of emergency will differ. The best way to ensure that nothing is forgotten is to calmly plan for each one now, when you are not under any kind of time pressure and can think clearly, rather than rushing at the onset of the emergency.

The types of emergencies that you may face can be categorised as follows, and the items suggested are given as a minimum to be covered by any personal plan you draw up.

At all times you should have the following to hand

- A minimum 5 days food should be held at all times for all cats in your care – you may wish to ensure that at least 2 weeks is held
- A minimum of 5 days litter should be held at all times for all the cats in your care – you may wish to ensure more is held
- Cat records including health information up to date
- List of emergency contacts in your absence – eg vet, food supplier, essential services
- List of appropriate information about all cats so that appropriate food, medication, handling, grooming etc can be given in your absence

#### **Personal Emergencies**

This might be an event that means you may need to be absent for a time from your cats, perhaps unexpectedly – eg death in the family, urgent medical attention, accident or other illness. It is suggested that you have all the above items, plus have someone nominated who might be able to look after the cats in your absence – whether that is neighbour, friend, fellow breeder etc

## Small Scale Emergency

A small emergency is one that might affect you only short term, eg power outage, food shortage, disrupted access to your property etc. It is suggested you have all the above items.

By ensuring that you always have a minimum 5 days supply of food to hand, this should avoid any issues from food outage at retailer / food spoilage from power outage etc. If you mainly feed food that is likely to become spoiled from power outage, having an emergency supply of dry food will also alleviate any issues.

## Large Scale Emergency

A large emergency is one such as a natural disaster, which requires significant thought and planning – you may need to decide for instance whether or not to evacuate. If you are planning to evacuate, then you need to ensure that you have all preparations drawn up beforehand, to avoid any chaos and confusion

### Suggested

- Consider the type of natural disaster which may affect your locality eg is your area flood prone or at bushfire risk, and what preventive measure could be taken now to reduce that risk
- List of emergency contacts eg vet, food suppliers, groomer, local shelter, catteries, other breeders that may be able to assist
- Determine an evacuation location and determine several alternative routes to get there
- Create an evacuation kit, which includes copy of animals records, food, litter, litter trays and any necessary medications
- Ensure you have enough cat carriers and that all cats can be easily placed into them
- Ensure you are aware of exactly how long it will take in an emergency to confine and load cats into your evacuation vehicle
- Decide beforehand under what conditions and at what stage of threat evacuation will occur

In the event that you are unable to evacuate your animals or have insufficient time to do so, and have to leave them behind

### Suggested minimum

- Ensure that food supply of at least 5 days is available at all times
- Ensure that litter supply of at least 5 days is available at all times
- Ensure areas around animal housing is free from toxic, dangerous or flammable material
- Ensure that a list of all appropriate information about all cats (eg location, colour, sex etc), is left so that appropriate food, medication etc may be provided in your absence

No matter the emergency, a plan that has been well thought out ahead of time will ensure that you reduce the risk of harm to any of your cats as well as yourself, and that in your absence, your cats can be cared for appropriately.