

PETS

What May Be The Options For Evacuation And Sheltering With Pets?

While pets are accepted at some facilities, for public health reasons, many large-scale emergency shelters cannot accept pets.

For many of you, your pets represent members of your family and designated mass shelters will make every attempt to help your pets.

Please understand, however, that preserving and protecting human life takes priority.

If you are evacuating with a pet: if possible and easily accessible, bring a cage, leash, food, and veterinary records, including immunization records.

Understand that pets will not be allowed into any shelter until they are thoroughly washed to remove any radioactive material.

You may choose to stay with friends or relatives outside the evacuation area who will house both you and your pet.

You can try locating a motel or hotel that will allow you to stay with your pet.

Listen to local radio/news broadcasts for information on pet evacuation and the locations of available pet shelters.

If you have pets in your home shelter, prepare a place for them to relieve themselves inside the shelter. Pets should not go outside during a radiation emergency because they may track radioactive materials from outside into the shelter. Preparing a place for pets will keep the radioactive materials from getting inside the shelter (NJDHSS, 2011a).

How should people decontaminate their pets?

Seek advice from local response authorities.

Radioactive fallout could contaminate people and pets as dust particles.

Contact with and movement of contaminated animals might expose more individuals and items.

A thorough cleaning of animals can present a challenge because there is no layer of clothing to take off and animals with long hair are more difficult to clean (NSSOSTP).

As with people, any action to dust off and partially remove contamination is helpful (NSSOSTP).

When brushing animals, care should be taken to avoid inhaling any particulates. Using a dust mask and brushing the animals outside and upwind from the animal may be appropriate (NSSOSTP).

If you must decontaminate your pet, the suggested method is to bathe your pet thoroughly with shampoo and water and rinse completely.

Wear waterproof gloves, an apron, and, if possible, a dust mask to protect yourself from (further) contamination, including inhaling fallout dust.

Follow local jurisdictional guidance on the disposal of bath water and items coming into contact with contaminants.