

Emergency Evacuation with your Pet

By Joseph Parish

Let's briefly discuss a hypothetical situation. We all recognize how grave our economy has been becoming these days, but do we actually comprehend what the consequences will be. Here we are experiencing long lines at the gas station for fuel, and the grocery stores are just about out of any useable food resources. Countless people are on the verge of starvation and the nation is only one step from total collapse.

You and your family are essentially all alone, and you can only rely upon each other. There, you are as papa bear, your wife as momma bear, along with your three children. Additionally, as if it was not bad enough to provide for your immediate family, you must also ponder the family pet, Zeke the dog. Zeke is a huge German Shepard, weighing about one hundred pounds, and as such he consumes a huge amount of dry dog food. Everyone in the family agrees that Zeke is well worth the expenses needed to feed him and they all consider him a part of the family.

Since our family is survivalists, and Preppers, even Zeke is assigned a job to perform in emergency situations. As an ex-DEA Drug dog, Zeke has completed no less than four different obedience classes, however, after receiving two close range bullets and ultimately recovering, we view him as a Canine hero. The question which I am proposing here, is what would you do with the family dog in the event of an infrastructure collapse within our country. This naturally becomes a unique challenge for everyone concerned.

I would like to make one point perfectly clear; most people look at a dog as a protector. Nothing could be closer to a false belief than this. Dogs are not to be thought as a form of protection. Bullets and weapons can readily disable or kill a dog. My belief is that your favorite canine should act as a warning system. With their particular sense of smell, they can detect those people within your sphere of influence and immediately let you know someone is there.

When the time comes and it is necessary to evacuate your home for unknown locations some people question whether to take their pet or let it loose in the wild. During hurricane Katrina, the pets that did not die from the storm ended up being released to provide for themselves, by their owners. As a result of this the city of New Orleans is now overrun by the offspring of these released dogs. It is my hope that as a responsible pet owner, you would make the decision is to take your pet with you.

If you are going to have a pet you have to accomplish certain responsible actions. First, your dog must be able to come to you when you call it. This response must be instant, as any unnecessary delay during a time of evacuation could be disastrous for the entire family. Be sure your dog will come when called and practice over and over. In the case of Zeke, he listens from the training he had, however, if he sees a small animal he

will dart after it, and it becomes difficult to control him. This tells me he needs refresher training.

Always take your pet's health into consideration. If your dog has special medications which he or she needs, be sure to stock up on them before the collapse of our infrastructure. At the same time ensure that all your pet's shots are up to date. You don't need them catching a case of rabies.

The major key to embracing your pet into your evacuation plans is to actively include them. Here is a short list of items which will make his evacuation more enjoyable and safer.

First off, you will always want to know where your pet is at all times. I suggest you obtain a GPS positioning collar. Since they will be in unknown territory, you might wish to consider a harness of some sort. This will assist greatly in achieving positive control over the animal.

Before I close, I would like to take the time to describe a small entertainment kit which will keep your furry friend occupied as to travel to a safe location. These travel kits can be purchased at Amazon, or Walmart, but they are really very simple to create at home. Five-gallon buckets are usually available for free or for only a dollar or two. These come with a lid, and your children can have some fun decorating it with a dog type theme. Now it's time to fill the bucket with the items the pet would appreciate. I included:

- Collapsible water bowls
- One Bottle of water
- Tennis balls (Zeke loves playing with tennis balls outside)
- Pet Wipes for quick cleaning of paws
- A rawhide bone, these will keep your dog occupied for hours.
- Flea and Tick medication
- Assorted toys
- Toilet bag, for the dog poop

You can add to this list as you see fit with items like dog first aid supplies, and training treats. That about concludes it, so now your pet is ready to enjoy his moments of evacuation.