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Emergency plan needed for pets: SPCA

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs are reminding pet owners to have an emergency plan in place that includes their furry family members during Emergency Preparedness Week.

The week runs May 7 to 13 across Canada and is supported by Public Safety Canada, which aims to raise awareness on being prepared to protect yourself, your family, and your community during an emergency.

The awareness event has been held annually for over 25 years and traditionally takes place during the first full week of May.

?We urge people to take the time to plan for the unexpected. By having a plan in place and the necessary emergency supplies to shelter in place, you will be in a better position to help the ones you love, including your pets,? said Dawn Lyons, manager of the Orangeville and District Animal Centre.

?As a non-profit organization committed to fire and life safety and the well-being of our community, we recognize the importance of being prepared for emergencies and disasters, including those that may impact our furry friends,? said Rob Grimwood, president of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. ?By working together with the Ontario SPCA, we aim to raise awareness and promote preparedness measures that ensure the safety and welfare of both people and animals during times of crisis.?

To help families keep their furry companions safe in the event of an emergency, the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society have shared five tips to follow.

1. Put together an emergency preparedness kit containing everything you, your family, and your pet will need in the first 72 hours of an emergency. You should check the emergency kit at least twice yearly and update it if necessary

2. Have an evacuation plan that includes your animals, and check to ensure the evacuation destination accepts pets

3. Ensure your dog or cat is wearing a collar with an identification tag, ideally with your phone number or the number of a relative outside your area in case you can't be reached by phone. It's also important to have your pet microchipped to help increase the chances of being reunited in an emergency

4. Keep a current photo of your pet with you and make sure it includes their name, address and a brief description, such as unique markings, in case you need to claim your pet or share information about your lost pet during an emergency

5. Post an emergency decal on your front door to make sure first responders are aware there are pets inside the home. The decal can help improve the chances your pet is rescued or receive the care they need if an emergency like a fire occurs when you're not home

For more information or to request a free emergency decal for your front door, visit www.ontariospca.ca.