

Tips & Tools

- ALWAYS follow instructions from local Emergency management.
- Listen to several news sources frequently for updates: radio, TV, etc.
- Make emergency plans in advance, hurricanes can change direction without notice.
- Consider micro-chipping horses, and when a warning is issued, write your contact info on hooves in permanent marker.
- Have maps handy and alternate routes planned in case of road closures.
- Gather all important documents such as registration papers, vaccination records, etc. and place in ziplock bags to prevent water damage. Keep them in your possession.
- Have a flashlight and battery powered radio with extra batteries on hand.
- Be prepared to be without water or power for an extended period of time.
- Call friends/relatives in advance and tell them your evacuation plans or let them know if you are sheltering in place. Make sure you have as many contact numbers as possible.
- Take recent photos of your animals to use in case they are lost/escape.
- Annually review your insurance policy to ensure you have proper coverage. Never wait until just before the storm.
- Use flashlights and not candles in case of gas or other flammable fumes.
- Note that wells can be contaminated by flooding; take precautions and use bottled water.

Additional Resources

This brochure is meant as a guideline only and is not a complete plan. For additional information, please contact the groups listed below:

VA Department of Emergency Management www.vdem.state.va.us

The American Red Cross (ARC):
www.redcross.org (202) 303-4498

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA):
www.aspca.org (212) 876-7700

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) www.noaa.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov

**Membership dues made this brochure possible. Please consider joining the VHC so that we may continue to serve the industry.

***Information courtesy of the Connecticut Horse Council.

Horses & Hurricanes



VIRGINIA
HORSE COUNCIL

The Virginia Horse Council
368 Litton Reaves (0306)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
www.virginiahorsecouncil.org
Toll Free Number
1-888-HORSEVA (888-457-7382)
Fax 1-540-231-3713

Hurricane Categories & Advisories

It is important to know the difference in categories so that you can take adequate precautions. Hurricanes are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the worst. Hurricanes have an “eye” where storm winds will temporarily cease. This is the center of the storm. **DO NOT GO OUTSIDE** during this time. As soon as the eye has passed, the storm will resume, usually with stronger winds.

A hurricane “Watch” is declared in the event a hurricane “might” strike an area within 36 hours. A hurricane “Warning” is issued when a direct strike by a hurricane is imminent within 24 hours. Horse owners should **NOT** wait until a hurricane warning is issued. You should begin taking action as soon as any hurricane advisories are issued.

Additionally, horse owners should be prepared for rapid weather changes, because hurricanes are very unpredictable and can change direction and speed at any time.

Prior to the Hurricane

Make an assessment of your needs and the needs of your animals. Can you be without power and/or water for an extended period of time? Do you have enough medications, feed, bedding on hand?

If you install a generator, you should consult with an electrician about a breaker box. A fire or electrocution could result if the power returns while the generator is running. Generators should **NEVER** be used inside or in an enclosed area; fumes are toxic.

There are many items you need to have on hand, these include; extra medications, first aid kit, a toolkit, duct tape, hand can opener, and a small class AMC fire extinguisher. For a recommended list of items, visit the VHC website www.virginiahorsecouncil.org.

Annually review your insurance policy to ensure you have proper coverage. Never wait until just before a storm, because there may be restrictions or waiting periods. Never assume something is automatically covered, ask your agent to clarify.

Evacuations

Pay close attention to news reports, if you are ordered to evacuate, do so immediately and do **NOT** wait until the last minute. You should have made advance plans about transporting your horses.

Make certain you take important paperwork with you such as vaccination records, Coggins, registration papers. These should be sealed in ziplock bags for protection. Horses should be marked with contact information in some fashion: permanent marker on hooves, non-toxic spray paint on hair, halter with tags or microchips.

Plan alternate evacuation routes, roads may be closed for various reasons. Have local and state maps on hand as well.

Sheltering in Place or Leaving Horses

If you are not evacuating, you must still be prepared to deal with storm surge, flooding, power outage and high winds.

If you must evacuate and leave your horse, make sure you consider issues such as flooding and flying debris. Also, leave as much hay and water as possible; you may not be able to return for several days. Notify your local police department if you are leaving your horses; provide your contact information and their description and location. Secure or store any objects which may become airborne.

After the Storm

Never walk or lead horses through deep standing water, there may be debris underneath. Be on the lookout for downed power lines which may still be live. If you can so do safely make efforts to protect property from further damage: clear debris, cover roof damage with tarps. Be aware that water may be contaminated, use bottled water if possible. To purify water, add 2 drops of chlorine bleach per quart and let stand for half an hour.

Considerations

Regardless of whether you stay or evacuate, you may not be able to receive help from a veterinarian or obtain feed and supplies from stores. You need to be able to be self-reliant for a period of day or possibly weeks.

If you have a horse that is difficult to load do not wait for an emergency to work on the problem, train your horse in advance it could save both your life and your horse's.

Never assume that you will be rescued if you stay after an evacuation order is given. It may be impossible for rescuers to reach you.

Whether you evacuate or shelter in, please inform several friends and family members of your plans. Make certain they have ways to contact you and vice-versa. Consider having a pre-designated meeting place and time.

Just because you have not been ordered to evacuate initially does not mean that you cannot be ordered later - even after the storm. Be prepared should this happen.

If you are completely prepared and have time check on neighbors, friends and relatives to ensure they are prepared as well. Also plan for small animals, barn cats and dogs need protection too and most human shelters will not accept pets.

Think Safety - Plan and Prepare!