



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASPCA Assists in the Evacuation of 40 Homeless Animals in the Path of Hurricane Ian

Residents in impacted communities strongly encouraged to incorporate pets into preparedness and evacuation plans

LEE COUNTY, Fla. – The [ASPCA](#)® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) assisted with the evacuation of 40 homeless cats and kittens in the path of Hurricane Ian and strongly urges residents to incorporate their pets into preparedness and evacuation plans. The shelter animals are being relocated at the request of Lee County Domestic Animal Services as they work to evacuate animals from their shelter ahead of the storm making landfall. The ASPCA sponsored a flight to transport these animals out of harm's way to Massachusetts MSPCA and Second Chance Animal Services. All of the animals transported out of impacted communities in advance of the storm are unowned and will be made available for adoption in the coming weeks.

Hurricane Ian is expected to strengthen to a Category 4 storm bringing heavy rainfall, storm surge and high winds throughout the next several days as it quickly approaches Florida's Gulf Coast. The ASPCA disaster response team is in communications with local and state emergency response agencies and stands ready to assist displaced animals and pet owners upon request.

"As Hurricane Ian continues to intensify, we are reminding pet owners in impacted communities the importance of including pets in all disaster preparedness plans, especially those involving a potential evacuation," said **Susan Anderson, Director of Disaster Response for the ASPCA National Field Response Team**. "We commend Lee County Domestic Animal Services for quickly identifying the need to evacuate these animals out of the storm's path as well as our Massachusetts-based partners for opening their doors to bring these cats to safety."

Recent [ASPCA research](#) revealed that more than one in five pet owners have evacuated their homes due to a disaster or emergency and nearly half left at least one pet behind when they evacuated. Nearly 40 percent of pet-owning evacuees did not return to their homes for at least four days, and in some cases up to two weeks. Leaving a pet behind can expose them to numerous life-threatening hazards including the inability to escape the impending emergency, as well as having no access to fresh food and water for an unknown period of time.

As we recognize National Preparedness Month this September, the ASPCA is sharing lifesaving expert tips on keeping animals safe during a disaster and urging residents in the pathway of approaching hurricanes to include pets in their evacuation plans.

The ASPCA advises pet owners to take the following steps:

- If you evacuate, take your pets with you. Never leave your pets behind or tether them to poles or trees, which prevents them from escaping high waters and getting to safe areas.
- In the event of flooding, go to the highest location in your home or a room that has access to counters or high shelves where your animals can take shelter.

- Make sure all pets are wearing identification tags with up-to-date contact information. The ASPCA also recommends checking microchip registration information to ensure that contact information is up to date as well.
- Create a portable pet emergency kit with essential items including medical records, water, water bowls, pet food and your pet's medications.
- Choose a designated caregiver, such as a friend or relative outside the evacuation zone, who can take care of your pet in the event you are unable.

For more information on how to incorporate your pet into your disaster preparedness plans, visit [aspc.org/disasterprep](https://www.aspc.org/disasterprep).

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) was the first animal welfare organization in North America and continues to serve as the nation's leading voice for animals. More than two million supporters strong, the ASPCA is committed to its mission of providing effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. For more information, please visit [www.ASPCA.org](https://www.aspc.org), and be sure to follow the ASPCA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).