

CFS FACT SHEET

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CARE OF PETS AND LIVESTOCK

The care and transport of pets and livestock prior to, during and after the passage of fire is rarely mentioned in any advice or information regarding bushfire prevention and safety. But the loss of a loved pet is usually, especially for children, just as upsetting as the loss of a home and personal possessions. The heartache can be avoided if; when developing a bushfire survival plan that pets and other livestock are included.

Small Animals (dogs, cats, birds, rabbits etc)

Forward planning:

- Ensure your dogs and cats are identified and registered with the local council to increase the chance of being reunited if you become separated.
- Get your animals used to travel when young. Take them on regular car journeys so they are comfortable travelling and don't get carsick.
- Be sure that you can adequately restrain or confine your pet, as it may become frightened and panic in a fire.
- Dogs: check you have collars, leads or a harness and a muzzle if dog is aggressive.
- Cats, rabbits, guinea pigs: use a secure cage or firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.
- Birds, ferrets, mice: also use a secure cage or box with air holes.
- Fish: transport in a wide necked jar with a secure lid and fill with 2/3 water (include a plastic straw to blow air into water now and again).
- Snakes and lizards: use a secure box with small air holes or a firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.
- Frogs: transport in a small tub with 2cm of water in bottom and air holes in lid.
- Ensure your pets' vaccinations are up to date in case they need to be placed in a pet boarding facility.
- If your family has decided to leave early in the event of a bushfire, then be sure to remember your pets when preparing your 'relocation kit'. Consider including:
 - plastic containers for water
 - small amount of food (dry food is best for dogs and cats)
 - medication (such as daily heartworm tablet)
 - litter or newspaper
 - an information list containing your name, address, phone number, pets name, medical history, food requirements and vets phone number.

On fire danger days

- If you have to go to work decide whether to take your animals to a safer place before leaving home. Keep in mind that if there is a fire you may not be allowed home for some time.
- If you are home shut your pets inside the house so they are close by. Check your 'relocation kit' to ensure you have leads and containers of water ready if you plan to leave in the event of a fire.
- If you do plan to leave early, do so while it is still safe to do so. Handle your pets firmly but reassuringly. Restrain dogs and confine other animals in cages or suitable containers. Cover cages with a woollen blanket or wet towel and secure all pets in the car.

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Larger Animals (horses, cattle, sheep and goats etc)

Forward Planning:

Your options will obviously depend on the size of your property, the number of stock and where your animals are kept. However, the following suggestions may be of some help:

- Identify the 'safest paddock on your property or neighbouring property. For example, one which:
 - contains a water supply,
 - has clear access,
 - is well grazed with minimum fuel to carry fire, and
 - is well fenced.
- Consider fencing the 'safe' paddock with steel or concrete posts so it is fireproof.
- If your fencing is electric, consider what may happen if the power supply is cut off during a fire.
- Consider having gates in internal property boundaries so stock can be easily moved to other areas without being taken down a road.
- If you are at work during the day, consider moving stock into the 'safe' paddock the night before a fire danger day – refer to the CFS Fact sheet 'Fire Danger Ratings'.
- If possible thoroughly water the 'safe' paddock the night before a Total Fire Ban Day.

If fire threatens

The following suggestions are most applicable to horses but may help other types of livestock:

- Hose your animals all over and do not scrape off
- Remove all equipment from your animal – rugs burn, plastic headstalls melt and metal buckles may get hot.
- Move the animals into an open space with the least vegetation.
- DO NOT shut animals into a stable or small yard. Animals will suffer minimal burns if given the maximum space and can cope well on their own if they can move into the open.

For more information on emergency response and recovery for animals, see South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM): <http://www.savem.org.au/>

For more information about being Bushfire Ready:

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline

on **1300 362 361** (TTY 133 677)

or visit www.cfs.sa.gov.au