



Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2012

## **Severe Weather Preparation Guidelines for Horse Owners**

Severe weather can strike at any time and preparation is a horse owner's best protection. It is essential to become familiar with the types of severe weather threats that can occur in your area and develop a disaster plan. Severe weather preparation for Tennessee and the southern states should especially include plans for severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes and floods.

### **Before the Storm:**

- Make sure horses are up to date on health care and vaccines (especially tetanus) and have a current negative Coggins test (plan immunization schedule with your veterinarian).
- Maintain good health records and feeding instructions.
- Have enough water, hay, other feeds and medications on hand to get through at least 48 hours.
- Have an alternative water source in case well pumps or water lines are damaged or there is loss of power.
- Ensure horses can be identified: Microchip, tattoo, brand, photos (4 views with front, rear, both sides and any special markings). Consider having permanent halter plates or tags that include your name and phone number.
- If halters are left on horses in pastures they should be leather, have a leather crown piece, or a type of safety breakaway crown piece.
- Locate an area and have a plan to confine animals on your property for each type of disaster.
- Determine an evacuation route and identify alternative evacuation routes.
- Identify facility owners/operators for temporary housing (ie. private stables, show grounds, veterinary clinics, animal shelters).
- Make sure your horse loads in a horse trailer safely and is accustomed to trailering.
- Trucks should be fueled up and trailers should be in good maintenance at all times.
- Make sure all farm personnel are familiar with the disaster plans.
- A first Aid Kit should be easily accessible and labels should be checked for expiration dates.
- A portable radio and extra batteries should be on hand.

- Check fences and gates regularly for repair needs.
- Prepare an emergency kit including large plastic trash cans, water buckets, extra halters and cotton lead ropes, wire cutters, sharp knife or scissors, flashlights, bleach and/or other disinfectants.
- Assess insurance needs for both property and horses.
- Practice the disaster plan.

### **During the Storm:**

- Keeping horses in a barn depends on the type of weather threat and the soundness of the structure. A solid structure such as a barn can protect horses from lightning, hail and debris from high winds. If you do not have a safe solid structure, horses should be left in pastures. If flooding is a concern, horses can become trapped in barns and are better off left turned out where they can flee to high ground.
- Listen to the Emergency Broadcasting System alerts using a portable radio. A device to access the internet is also useful to stay informed of weather conditions and threats.
- Do not rely on automatic water systems in case power is lost.
- If you evacuate, take health records, emergency items, first aid kit, feed and water with you.

### **After the Storm**

- Check pastures and fences for damage and debris.
- House horses in a secure area after a disaster.
- Use caution when approaching unknown horses and
- If you temporarily house horses, isolate unknown horses.
- Be aware of potential disease outbreaks that result from disasters by contacting the State Veterinary Medical Association or the Department of Agriculture.
- Proper identification and documented ownership should be provided to claim lost horses.
- Provide fresh clean water (water can become contaminated, especially after flooding).
- Restrict access to flooded pastures.

For more information on preparing for severe weather and disaster planning for horse owners, please visit:

[http://www.aaep.org/emergency\\_prep.htm](http://www.aaep.org/emergency_prep.htm).

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/livestock.shtm>

---

The “**Tennessee e-QUINE Report**” is a monthly e-publication developed by [Dr. Bridgett McIntosh](#), Department of Animal Science, Extension Horse Specialist, featuring timely issues for equine clientele throughout the State. To subscribe to the e-QUINE Report, contact your [local county Extension office](#). Previous Issues: [October 2011](#), [September 2011](#), [August 2011](#), [May 2011](#), [June 2011](#), [July 2011](#)

---

<http://animalscience.ag.utk.edu/Horse/Publications-eQUINE.html>

