

## Protect your pets this bushfire season

*Having a plan for your pets could be the key to survival*

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Having a plan for your pets could be the key to survival this bushfire season, say the CFS and RSPCA.

Bushfires in recent years have claimed the lives of a number of pets. In some cases this can be attributed to people not having a pet emergency plan in place for their furry loved ones.

CFS Project Officer, Oshanna Alexander, says being prepared with a pet emergency plan as part of your bushfire survival plan will assist in staying calm and focussed at the time a bushfire occurs.

"On days of extreme fire danger or when a bushfire warning message has been issued knowing what you are going to do with your pets will potentially reduce stress," she said.

"Without a plan for your pets you can quickly find yourself in an overwhelming situation especially if you are trying to gather cats, dogs or even horses and work out what to do with them.

"A plan for the pet may include how you will transport them, where you will take them and who will take responsibility. You may be able to assign a small task to each of your children for instance."

RSPCA South Australia CEO, Tim Vasudeva, says acting early and being prepared can avoid danger, panic and potentially fatal situations for people and their animals.

"We know in the 2009 Victorian bushfires, not only was there loss of human life but many pets also perished because they were not relocated in time," he said.

"It was clear there has been a gap within emergency planning about what people should do with their pets. That's why we have joined forces with the CFS to help inform pet owners about how to protect their pets in emergencies.



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"The Sampson Flat bushfires demonstrated how sudden the need to evacuate can be. Being prepared with a plan is the key. There are three easy steps to your Pet Emergency Plan: Include your pets in your wider Bushfire Survival Plan, prepare a Pet Emergency Kit, and practice your plan."

For more information on prepping your own Pet Emergency Plan, visit:  
<http://www.rspcasa.org.au/the-issues/animals-in-emergencies/>

Watch the video on how to prepare you pet emergency plan here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLjVolUlpNg>

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