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In the wake of recent earthquake, fires: be ready for disaster
spcaLA Urges Disaster Preparedness for Pets

Los Angeles, CA – It is disaster season in Los Angeles. While earthquakes, like yesterday's 4.2 quake in Westwood, CA, can happen anytime, the dry, hot weather has already sparked several fires throughout the Southland. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) urges residents to prepare for disaster, and for pet owners to include their animals in their plans.

spcaLA's Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) ™ answers the call for aid from municipal, state, and federal agencies providing rescue, front-line veterinary care, food and temporary shelter for animals during disasters. In Southern California, spcaLA rescues pets, horses, livestock, and exotics from the paths of fires, mudslides, earthquakes, and other disasters.

"As spcaLA saw first-hand during Hurricane Katrina, pet owners will often risk their own safety to save their animals," said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. "Help avoid that situation by creating a disaster plan for your whole family, pets included."

Preparing for a disaster will allow spcaLA and other responders to provide for the safety of your pets.

Prepare for your pets' safety

- Microchip your dogs and cats, and ensure they are wearing current ID tags at all times.
- Familiarize yourself with pet CPR, resuscitation, and general first aid. If roads are blocked, emergency services may not be available.
- Keep your pets current on vaccines. During a disaster, your pet may get lost or may be housed in a shelter with other animals, thereby potentially being exposed to infectious diseases.
- Entrust a neighbor or friend to get your pets to safety, in case you are at work when a disaster strikes, and make a back-up plan to board your animal during a disaster (veterinarian, boarding facility, etc.).
- Display a [Pet Alert] sign in doors and windows, so responders know there are animals on the premises.

Make a kit
In addition to the food, water and supplies you need for the people in your family make sure to include the following items for you pets in your disaster kit.

- Current photos of your pets, copies of vaccination records & veterinarian's contact info
- Collars, leashes & carriers for your pets
- A minimum of three weeks' supply of pet food & bottled water (plus bowls & can openers)

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- Treats, toys, blankets & towels
- Pet First Aid Kit (should include: pet first aid book, antiseptic, topical ointment, dressing and any prescribed pet medications)
- Soft muzzle (some government evacuation vehicles/facilities may require for all dogs)
- Waste removal system: disposable baggies for dogs and/or cat litter, scooper & temporary litter box (like a disposable aluminum foil pan) for cats
- Animal Evacuated sign (to alert responders that your animals are safely evacuated)

During the disaster

- Try to stay calm. If you display anxiety and stress, your pet will detect it. This could trigger aggressive behaviors or a flight response.
- Continuously check pet structures and favorite hiding places for hazardous debris.
- Alert local shelters immediately if your pet becomes lost.
- Display your "Animal Evacuated" sign if you evacuate with your pet, so that emergency teams can respond where assistance is actually needed.

spcaLA relies on donations not government funding or assistance from other agencies to provide services for animals during disasters. For more information and to donate, visit www.spcaLA.com.

For more information, please contact Miriam Davenport at 323-730-5300 x233, cell 323-353-4658 or mdavenport@spcaLA.com

Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.