

## IDENTIFICATION

Horses sometimes get lost during storms. Before you leave, make sure you identify every horse on your property. Secure an ID tag in their mane, use livestock crayon to write your phone number on their body, or attach a neck band with your cell phone number. A luggage tag can be attached to a break-away halter.

Veterinarians agree that microchipping is the ideal identification for horses. If your horse has a microchip, tattoo or freeze brand, take the paperwork with you. You also need photographs of each horse in case you have to prove ownership. (Just how many bay mares are there? Or black geldings? A lost horse with no ID is another disaster!)

Spray paint your cell phone number, or another contact number, on the side of your barn. Add HORSES INSIDE or HORSES IN PASTURE so emergency personnel will know to check on them. Be sure someone in the area knows where you will be. Set up a buddy system so that whoever comes home first can check on their neighbors' animals.

**Your community may want to set up a "Lost Horse Hotline", with a specific place for found horses to be taken. Check with emergency management personnel in your county to see if such a plan is feasible.**

## RETURNING HOME

First, check your fences, buildings, electrical and gas hookups, and water supplies. Be very cautious of downed power lines and standing water. You may need to clear your pasture of debris or do some repair work before putting your horses away. Inspect hay and feed that was left behind, to examine for mold or other water damage. Supply all horses with fresh water.

On the other hand, if you find a loose horse, approach it carefully. Separate the new horse from your horses, but keep it close enough to remain calm. If the horse has an identification tag, call its owners. If not, call the authorities in your area to report the found horse.

### CLEMSON UNIVERSITY LIVESTOCK POULTRY HEALTH

500 Clemson Road  
Columbia, SC 29224-2406  
803-788-2260  
[www.clemson.edu/lph](http://www.clemson.edu/lph)

SC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
PO Box 11280  
Columbia, SC 29211  
[www.agriculture.sc.gov](http://www.agriculture.sc.gov)



South Carolina

# DISASTER PLAN FOR HORSES



SC DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

and

**CLEMSON®**  
LIVESTOCK POULTRY HEALTH

# HAVING A PLAN FOR YOUR HORSES DURING A DISASTER

## TIME TO ACT!

Natural disasters like hurricanes and floods usually don't give us much time to act. That's why it is vital to **plan ahead**. Being prepared can save you and your animals a great deal of stress. Develop a plan, stick with your plan, and most important be safe.

## TAKE 'EM OR LEAVE 'EM

If you choose to leave your horses, consider where they will be safer:

Barn or pasture?

### Barn:

If your barn is capable of withstanding hurricane winds and on high ground, it may be best to leave your horses inside. However, they will need enough hay and water for several days, in case you cannot return immediately.

#### **Beware: If the power is off, automatic waterers will not work.**

Since the average horse drinks 15 to 20 gallons of water a day, one bucket is not enough. Consider a large plastic trash can, secured so it cannot be overturned, that your horse can access at will.

### Pasture:

If the barn is old or not well constructed, leave your horses outside or secure the doors open so they can get out into a pasture or paddock.

Most injuries during high winds come from flying debris, such as tin from the barn roof. Do not leave horses in small paddocks where they cannot escape wind-driven debris or overhead power lines.

Large pastures are often the best place for horses. Remember, horses have lived outside for thousands of years, and their instinct will go a long way toward keeping them out of trouble. Check your pasture for hazards. Don't forget the water!

**During a hurricane, the leading causes of death are collapsed barns, dehydration, electrocution, and accidents from fencing failure.**

## EVACUATION

Make the decision early! Trailers and high winds are not a good combination! Also, by leaving before a mandatory evacuation order goes into effect, you may avoid heavy traffic.

If you decide to move your horses, you should know where you're going. Make arrangements with friends or boarding facilities well in advance. Call before you leave to make sure they can still accommodate you. Follow the recommended SC DOT evacuation routes as closely as possible to your destination.

- Make sure your horse can load into a trailer
- Leave early and know your route

You can look at this link for possible stables:

<http://agriculture.sc.gov/animalag>

**Go to: "Livestock Emergency Information"**

## Coastal Evacuation Routes

1. Northern (N. Myrtle Beach to Georgetown) may evacuate toward Florence/Camden
2. Central (Charleston) may head toward Columbia.
3. Northern (Hilton Head) may move toward Aiken/Augusta

**[www.sctraffic.org](http://www.sctraffic.org)**

### Supplies:

Take water, hay, and enough feed for several days. Even when the storm is over, downed trees and power lines could keep you from returning home right away. Make sure your gas tank is full.

Put together an emergency kit for the road, since you may be stranded in a strange place. Keep these handy for quick transport:

- Extra halters and lead ropes
- Buckets
- First aid supplies; disinfectant
- Your horses' health records, papers and current Coggins tests
- A week's supply of needed medication
- Leg wraps and foot bandages
- Flashlight and batteries

If you have not made arrangements for stabling, check with emergency shelters and local horse clubs for recommended emergency shelters. Call ahead to check to make sure they still have room and to be aware of any special requirements.