

Pet Evacuation Preparedness

The proposed Pet Evacuation Policy currently under consideration by the State Department would require all pet owners to agree in writing to ensure their pets are fully prepared at all times for evacuation.

Although there are certain steps pet owners can only take in the month or weeks prior to departure (please see Management Notice 11/070, Outgoing Travel with Pets for more information), the following checklist offers important things you can do **NOW** to make sure your pet is ready for emergency travel.

Does your pet have...?

An airline-approved, hard-sided kennel with a functioning latch?

*Cat and small dog owners: if pets are not allowed to accompany us and must be transported by cargo plane, a **hard-sided kennel is required**. Pets will **not** be transported as cargo in soft-side kennels.*

Medical records, ready in your To Go Bag, showing current vaccinations required for entry into the U.S. and possible transit countries?

*To enter the United States: All dogs **must** have been vaccinated for rabies at least 30 days prior to entry. There is currently no rabies vaccination requirement for cats, however individual states may have rabies vaccination requirements.*

A collar with identification tag?

A 30-day supply of any required medication?

A microchip? *Although this doesn't affect us in Latin American, as of 2011, microchipping was required for all pets traveling to Europe. If you'll be moving to a European post or transiting Europe, consider getting this done in advance.*

Have you...

Identified at least one local caretaker to be called upon in the event that efforts to evacuate the pet are not successful?

Identified at least one individual in the U.S. to whom the pet can be sent?

Provided to the CLO or your Post Pet Evacuation Officer your pet's name, species, breed, gender, and size for inclusion in the Embassy Pet Database?

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Dear Pet Owners:

In 2011, nine U.S. Embassies faced emergency situations, and at three of them – Cairo, Tripoli, and Damascus – non-essential employees were ordered to depart post. When this happened in Cairo, evacuated employees were required to leave more than 150 pets behind. Since current State Department policy allows for the exclusion of pets from evacuations, these employees contacted AFSA, national animal welfare organizations, and Congress for assistance in getting their pets home.

As a result, AFSA submitted a proposed Pet Evacuation Policy to the Under Secretary for Management last spring. This proposal (which you can read at <http://www.afsa.org/Portals/0/petevac1.pdf>) makes a case for evacuating pets with their owners. It also outlines steps that pet owners must take to ensure their pets are prepared in case of evacuation. The proposal is still under consideration by the Under Secretary, but there are several things that we as pet owners can do that will be helpful in the event of an emergency. Our Management Section and Front Office have given their approval for this effort.

Over the next few months, I will be creating a database of Embassy pets, preparing an information sheet for current and incoming pet owners, and gathering information on local and international options for transport and care of our pets should we ever face a situation here leading to an authorized or ordered departure. **Your participation is entirely voluntary.**

The first step is to create a database of Embassy pets. (The proposed policy defines household pets as: dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, rodents, and turtles.) If an evacuation ever becomes necessary, Post will be able to share this information about the size and needs of our pet population with Washington.

•To participate, please reply directly to me by email with the following information for each pet.

Your name:

Pet's name:

Pet's species (dog/cat):

Pet's breed (beagle, Persian, mix):

Pet's gender (male/female):

All future emails will go only to employees who have self-identified as pet owners so as not to bother the non-pet owning members of the Embassy community.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

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