

Hurricane Tips for Horse Owners

Before the storm:

- ✓ Make a list of what you need to do or buy. Have plenty of feed, hay and water on hand in case you can't get to the store for a couple of weeks after the storm.
- ✓ Check your fences, and repair/strengthen any weak places.
- ✓ Place supplies, feed and hay in more than one spot—for example, your home and truck or trailer as well as your usual feed location. If one area is breached during the storm, you'll hopefully be able to access one of the other locations.
- ✓ Make a fact sheet up on every horse. Include the animal's name, age, vet and farrier information, emergency contacts, medical history including vaccinations, and current pictures. If your horse gets out during the storm you'll have something to immediately give to searchers.
- ✓ Have every horse microchipped, and ensure that the contact information is registered and correct.
- ✓ Know how barometric pressure affects your horses' guts. They are more prone to colic during hurricane events. Go to <http://horsesdaily.com/article/important-advice-equines-feeding-program-during-great-barometric-changes> for more information.
- ✓ Have duplicates of your Coggins, fact sheets, and vet records in more than one location, including your tow vehicle and trailer. If you have to evacuate you'll need these documents at the state line and/or any boarding facility.
- ✓ Plan your route in advance in case you do need to evacuate. Have a list of facilities that can accept you and your horses. If you intend to leave, you MUST do so before the wind gusts hit 40mph. You will not be allowed on an evacuation route with a high-profile vehicle/trailer after that—and it will not be safe for your trailer and horses. Consider carrying extra gas with you.
- ✓ Mark your horses! You can write your phone # on their sides with a livestock crayon, or paint your phone # on the front hooves with nail polish. Use a luggage or ID tag and weave it into the mane. Make or buy a break-away halter (NEVER the usual halter!) to place on your horse, or make or buy a break-away collar (preferably reflective) to put around the horse's neck. Write the horse's name and your phone # on the halter or collar.
- ✓ Move your tow vehicle and trailer out from under big trees. Do not leave them connected—if the trailer tips, it can take your vehicle with it and/or damage the hitch. Use mobile home tie-downs to anchor your trailer.
- ✓ Pick up all items in the yard, barn, porch etc. that could blow away or become weapons of destruction in a high wind.
- ✓ Leave your horses loose in the pasture, with access to the barn/shelter, if at all possible. If a horse is locked in a stall and the barn collapses, it is far worse than if the horse chooses to shelter in the pasture.
- ✓ Place a sturdy fly mask on the horse to protect his eyes.

After the storm:

- ✓ Be sure it's safe to go outside before you check on your horses. You do them no good if you're hit by flying debris on your way out.
- ✓ Check your horses thoroughly top to toe for any injuries as soon as possible. They are likely to be extremely skittish, so act accordingly and be aware.
- ✓ Take care of yourself; don't push too hard to clean everything up immediately. You will probably be extremely stressed and sleep deprived, and can do no good if you collapse or injure yourself by trying to do everything immediately.
- ✓ Check the fences/barn for damage as soon as possible.
- ✓ Remember that your horses are recovering from an extreme experience. Give them a long, soothing grooming. This will also help you to double-check for any injuries or sore spots, and hopefully calm their fears.
- ✓ Be careful when picking up debris. Ants and other stinging insects move into and under fallen limbs and leaves. Snakes also may be hiding in the mess.