



Instructions for pet owners in civil defence situations

Finland is not currently facing an immediate military threat. However, Finland is prepared to protect the population in case of incidents and emergencies, including when there is a threat of war and during times of war. This is part of the authorities' normal preparedness. In the event of a war, the population can be protected in civil defence shelters and through evacuations, for example. **Owners are responsible for ensuring that their pets and other domestic animals are protected in various situations.**

In exceptional situations, it is important to follow the instructions of the authorities promptly. Reliable information is available in publications from the authorities and mainstream media outlets. Always check the origin of news stories, especially when using social media channels.

It is important to protect yourself if requested to do so by the authorities. This way, you can also look after your pet. You should also consider in advance how you would be able to look after your pet in different situations. If there is a chance that you might not be able to look after your pet, agree in advance with your friends, family or neighbours on how they could help.

If you have to go to a civil defence shelter, leave your pet at home

Civil defence shelters are primarily designed and scaled to protect people. Guide dogs are an exception, and they must be allowed to enter civil defence shelters with their owners. There is only a small amount of space in civil defence shelters. The floor area per person is 0.6–0.75 square metres. First and foremost, all people must fit in a civil defence shelter. In addition, the crowded spaces in civil defence shelters may cause animals stress and anxiety.

The safest and least stressful place for pets is their own home. In general, pets are used to staying home alone every day. Pets can manage alone at home for several days when water and food are available. **As a rule, civil defence shelters are used for short periods, up to around three days.**

Create a sense of security by considering in advance how your pet would best manage at home. Mental exercises help you to calm down. Stay as calm as possible when leaving an animal at home.

Leave water available in several places. The best way to leave food out depends on the animal. For example, you should not leave an open bag of dry food for a dog with a voracious appetite. Instead, think about ways to regulate food intake. Dogs are able to go a relatively long time without eating. Cats, on the other hand, may well be left with food. Cats cannot go without eating for more than a day.

Spreading clothes that smell like the owners in the place where the pet sleeps can create an important feeling of safety for them. Spreading newspapers on the floor for dog waste may ease the animal's stress.

If you are evacuated, take your pet with you

In incidents and emergencies, the rescue authorities may also evacuate the population locally or more extensively. **In this case, owners are to take their pets with them. They should not be released into nature or left at home.** Pet owners should think in advance about what their pets will need. This is part of normal personal emergency planning.

You should pack the animal's carrier, tinned or dry food, water bottles, cups, bedding material and container, newspapers, bags, collar, leash and identification tags, vaccination certificate and any medicines. The pet should be microchipped. It is also recommended to have a picture of the pet for identification purposes if the pet runs away, for example.



Home is the safest
place for your pet

IF YOU GO TO A CIVIL DEFENCE SHELTER



Leave out
water



Create
a sense of security
with familiar
smells



Carefully
consider how much
food to leave out



Spread newspapers
on the floor for
droppings



Do mental exercises
beforehand and
stay calm



Instructions for pet owners in civil defence situations

Bring a collar/harness,
leash and identification
tag with you



Bring a vaccination
certificate, any medicines
and a picture of your pet
with you



Bring
bedding material and
container, newspapers,
bags with you



Bring your pet's
carrier with you



Bring food bowls,
food and water
with you



If you are
evacuated, bring
your pet with you



IF YOU ARE EVACUATED

Finland is not currently facing an immediate military threat. In the unlikely event of a war in which you would have to go to a civil defence shelter, leave your pet at home. It is the safest and least stressful place for your pet. As a rule, civil defence shelters are used for short periods of time, up to around three days. If you are evacuated, take your pet with you. Do not release your pet into nature or leave it at home. **Read more: pelastustoimi.fi**