

Emotional Support Animals and Shelters During Emergencies

Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act, some shelters may be considered residences under certain circumstances and will allow emotional support animals.

Check with the shelter you plan to go to and verify whether they consider themselves a residence and fall under the Fair Housing Amendments Act.



An emotional support animal is any animal that provides emotional support or comfort to someone with a disability.^{1,2}



Emotional support animals are not trained to perform tasks for a person with a disability, but provide companionship and may help with depression, anxiety, and specific phobias.

During an emergency, you may have to evacuate or leave your home to go to a safer place. Consider these tips to help your emotional support animal stay safe as well:

- **Get your emotional support animal microchipped** by their veterinarian ahead of time. Registering the microchip can help you find your animal if you become separated.
- **Prepare an emergency kit for your emotional support animal** ahead of time. Include everything your emotional support animal will need such as food, water, medication, leashes, beds, toys, and bags to get rid of their waste.
- **Place your and your emotional support animal's important documents in a watertight container.** Your service animal's important documents can include copies of their medical records, vaccination certificates, microchip information, and any prescriptions.
- **In case you are away from your emotional support animal when an emergency occurs,** have a person you trust to check on your emotional support animal and evacuate them. Be sure this person knows you might need their help in an emergency.
- **Practice evacuating or leaving your home with your emotional support animal** to make sure you can leave quickly and safely.
- **If you're unsure how to care for your emotional support animal in an emergency,** contact your animal's veterinarian, the local emergency management office, the animal shelter, or the animal control office for additional advice and information.



Learn more at

<https://bit.ly/prepare-for-emergencies>

¹ Ferrell J, & Crowley, S. L. Emotional support animals: A framework for clinical decision-making. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. 2021;52(6): 560–568. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000391>

² The ADA National Network. Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal: What's the Difference? <https://adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/differences>

