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NAPPS Provides Advice to Pet Owners in Tornado-Stricken Oklahoma
Tornado Preparation is Essential for Pet Owners

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. May 12, 2010 - Natural disasters like tornadoes are unpredictable and frightening, and they can wreak havoc on both homes and the surviving families. Not to be forgotten, the safety of the family pet is essential in these devastating emergency situations. As always, the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) offers strategies for pet owners facing the problems associated with tornadoes.

"Household pets are in great danger during tornadoes," states Monica Leighton, President of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS). "The key to pet safety in these situations is preparedness."

During a severe thunderstorm watch, conditions are right for:
- Lightning or damaging winds greater than 58 mph
- Hail reaching a diameter of 0.75 inches
- Heavy rain

A thunderstorm watch indicates that you should take action to protect yourself and your pets. Animals, especially dogs, can often hear thunderstorms before humans and may show this by becoming anxious, hiding and vocalizing. Horses will sometimes run frantically around their pasture.

If there is risk of a tornado, warnings will give the location and the area immediately affected by the alert.

If you are in a high or moderate risk area, follow these tips to protect yourself and your animals:

- Identify a group of volunteer spotters who watch the sky during threatening weather and report signs of a tornado to local emergency management officials, the regional office of the National Weather Service and local farmers.
- Designate a safe area in or near your home to shelter your family and animals in a severe thunderstorm. Teach family members what to do in a storm if they are at home, outside or in a car, including how to relocate animals to safe locations.
- If you have animals that get nervous and pose a safety risk in thunderstorms, contact your veterinarian for advice on how to mitigate this situation.

- The best preparation for a tornado is to designate a tornado shelter for yourself and your animals. Tornado shelters are safest if they are underground — a storm cellar or basement away from windows offers the best protection.
- If your home has no basement, stay in the center of the house away from the windows or in a small room on the ground floor away from outside walls. Take cover under solid furniture or mattresses. Protect your head.
- Do not drive. If you are driving and spot a tornado, get out of your car and go into a nearby building or ditch and take your animals with you. Protect your head and stay low to the ground.
- Know the location of the designated shelter where you work or go to school. If you frequently travel with your dog in the car, keep a leash in the vehicle at all times in case you have to vacate the car during a tornado.

NAPPS provides a comprehensive guide to disaster preparation for pet owners at its website: www.petsitters.org/cfincludes/MemberCenter/pdfs/DPPetOwner.pdf

About NAPPS: NAPPS is a national non-profit trade association dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, "To be the most respected authority in professional pet sitting." It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS' free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, nationwide referral service, and quarterly teleconferences aimed to educate the pet owning public. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS' nationwide "Pet Sitter Locator" at www.petsitters.org. For more information on NAPPS, please follow @TheNAPPS on Twitter or join us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.

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