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THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN FOR YOUR FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS

While most pets should be seen by a veterinarian on a regular basis, it is equally important to have an emergency plan in place just in case the unexpected happens. From weather-related evacuations to sickness, accident or death, it's smart to be prepared. Below is our top 10 list of some of the most important items to consider when developing an emergency care plan for your pets.

1. Who knows your pet well enough to provide care? Imagine a German shepherd meeting a stranger for the first time!
2. Will the caretaker be able to afford the cost of care, including food, toys, treats, vet bills and medicine? Or should you make financial arrangements to help with the expenses?
3. What is your pet's medical history? Where are the records kept?
4. Does your pet require any medications on a regular basis?
5. What does your pet eat? Is a special diet required?
6. What are your pet's habits, toys, eating schedule, grooming needs, etc.?
7. What do you call your pet? Many guardians rarely call their pets by their given name, instead choosing to call them by a nickname or other shortened name. This is important information for your caregiver to know. He or she must know which name the pet responds to.

8. Consider establishing a pet trust when appropriate, but be realistic about its purpose, tax consequence and cost. Next month we will talk about the framework for building a pet trust.
9. Do you have pet insurance? If so, is the contract assignable after your life? Be sure to keep the paperwork with your other important pet records.
10. Of key concern is whether you have a friend or other ally with whom you can trust to provide the care and attention your pet deserves. If not, an alternative may be a humane society or other such organization.

These are basic and minimum but important ideas for an emergency pet plan. Putting one together now – today is good – means you'll save time and have less worry later in the event a disaster should occur.

For more helpful information on pet planning visit www.humanesocietynaples.com

Go to www.probate-florida.com to read more about this subject.
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Ed Wollman is a FL Bar board certified wills, trusts and estates attorney with 26 years experience practicing in the state of FL.

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