

PROTECTING YOUR PET DURING IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT



In this moment of mass immigration detention and deportation, in addition to preparing yourself and your family, you may be wondering how best to prepare for your pet's care if you are detained. This community resource offers some specific steps you can take to protect your pets in case of ICE enforcement.

01 ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY CARETAKER AND PROVIDE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR PET'S LONGTERM CARE

Identify a trusted family member or friend who knows about your immigration status and may be willing to care for your pet in your absence. Discuss with this person if they are willing to step in to care for your pet in your absence and how much support they can offer, including whether they can pick up your pet from your home; if it is a good fit, give them instructions for your pet's care if your detention will be prolonged or you are deported. For example, unless your trusted family member or friend is willing to assume ownership over your pet, discuss with them if they should surrender your pet to the local animal shelter or rescue organization or if they are able to send your pet to reunite with you. As you consider these options, it is important to know that animal shelters and rescue organizations have been in crisis mode for years as they respond to record numbers of homeless animals. Mass deportations have made the crisis much worse, forcing many of them to make difficult euthanasia decisions because of a lack of space. This said, animal shelters and rescue organizations are a better option than leaving your pet with a stranger, especially given the prevalence of animal fighting rings and cruelty. If appropriate, ensure other family members and friends who may become aware of your detention know about this arrangement and have the contact information for the designated emergency pet caretaker.

If you do not have a trusted family member or friend who is able and willing to care for your pet in your absence, reach out to your local animal shelter and rescue organizations about temporary foster care services should ICE detain you and whether they should adopt out your pet or can help reunite your pet with you if you are deported.

If you are deported and wish your pet to reunite with you, it is important to research the required vaccines and documents of the country you will be deported to in order for your pet to reunite with you.

-  If vaccines or veterinary records are required for this process, consider getting your pet the required vaccinations and gathering the necessary veterinary records now (and emailing them to yourself so you can access them no matter where you are).
-  If you are not able to take these steps before ICE detains you, you may also wish to prepay for the necessary vaccines or maintain a credit with the veterinary office to make this process easier for your family member or friend.
-  Contact your veterinarian and provide your family member or friend's name as a person authorized to obtain your pet's records and make decisions over your pet's veterinary care.

02 GET YOUR PET MICROCHIPPED OR ADD A SECONDARY CONTACT TO AN EXISTING MICROCHIP



A microchip is not a tracking device. Instead, a microchip allows your pet to be matched to the contact information for a person or entity on file. A microchip only works if the contact information attached to it is current.

Most microchip registries allow you to list a secondary contact person. If your pet is already microchipped, you should ensure that your information is current, inform the trusted family member or friend who has agreed to care for your pet in your absence that you wish to list them as the secondary contact person on your pet's microchip, and then add them.

If your pet is not microchipped, microchip them and, in addition to your current contact information, include a secondary contact for the trusted family member or friend who is willing to care for your pet in your absence. Alternatively, list the local animal shelter as the secondary contact person, if your state and local jurisdiction allows for this.

Before listing the local animal shelter as a secondary contact, it is very important to contact your local animal shelter or research the laws in your jurisdiction to confirm whether this practice is allowed.

03 OBTAIN OR UPDATE YOUR PET'S ID TAG

Because your absence will likely cause your pet to be anxious, it is possible that they may try to find you and escape from your caretaker in the process. In addition to a microchip, ID tags on your pet's collar or an engraved collar are important because these provide immediately visible information without requiring a person who finds your pet to obtain a microchip scanner. The ID tag should include your current phone number and the phone number of the person who will step up to care for your pet if ICE detains you. If your pet is on medication or requires a special diet, get a medical alert ID tag to clearly signal a pet's urgent health needs.



04 SHARE PHOTOS OF YOUR PET WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

In addition to a microchip and ID tags, share photos of your pet, including photos of any unique markings, with your loved ones should your pet become lost. Photos of your pet will allow your loved ones to make flyers for your pet and readily identify them if they lack a microchip scanner and if the pet's ID tags or collar have fallen off.

05 SET UP AN ALERT SYSTEM WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Because ICE has detained people at their homes and failed to notify the local animal shelter even when they are aware that there are pets left behind, it is important to have an alert system for your community to step in to care for your pet. Otherwise, your pet may go days without food, water, any needed medicine, or the ability to relieve themselves outdoors, putting your pet's life at risk. Here are some tips for protecting your pet:

- a** Ask a trusted family member or friend to check in on you daily or every other day and leave an extra key to your home with them so that they can access your pet.
- b** If you have a trusted neighbor who you see on a frequent basis, give them the contact information of the person they should call if they don't see or hear from you in a couple of days, but can hear your pet inside your property.
- c** If you have an immigration attorney, share with them that you have a pet at home and request that they call your trusted family member or friend who you have identified as your pet's emergency caretaker if ICE detains you.

- d** If you rent your property and your landlord is aware of your pet, share with your landlord who they should contact in an emergency situation (without going into your immigration status or the reason for you providing this information) and who is authorized to pick up your belongings, including your pet.
- e** Have a printed list of contact information for your family members, friends, your pet's veterinarian, and your immigration attorney in a visible location in your home so that anyone entering your home trying to assist your pet knows who to call.
- f** Carry with you a card in your purse or wallet that notifies others that you have a pet alone at home. [Here](#) is one example.
- g** Place a sign on your window to notify the public that there is a pet in your home. [Here](#) is one example.

