

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to 'Prep Talk,' the emergency management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness. Get all the latest tips from experts in the field and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes. From the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps. Here are your hosts.

Christina Farrell ([00:25](#)):

Hello everyone. Thank you for listening. I'm Christina Farrell.

Allison Pennisi ([00:28](#)):

And I'm Alison Pennisi and you are our listeners, and as always, we thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to listen to 'Prep Talk' on your favorite podcast provider. You can also follow us on social media, on our Twitter [@nycemergencymgt](#), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and much more.

Christina Farrell ([00:48](#)):

If the last two years have taught us anything, it's that we need to be prepared. I feel like we probably learned another couple of lessons in there too, but we'll stick with, we need to be prepared. We have faced a wide arrange of emergencies from severe weather, like extreme heat, a very active hurricane season, obviously some flooding, unfortunately, and we also continue to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Allison Pennisi ([01:14](#)):

That's right, Christina, it's important for everyone to take the time to make and review their emergency plans. That includes preparing our pets and service animals for disasters. So here to discuss emergency preparedness, including ways we all can make sure our pets and service animals are ready for emergencies is Andy Perlman, New York City Emergency Management's animal planning & disability, access & functional needs operations program manager. He is also a member of the City's animal planning task force. Andy, welcome back to 'Prep Talk.'

Andy Perlman ([01:44](#)):

Thank you very much, Allison.

Allison Pennisi ([01:45](#)):

All right, let's get right into it. September is National Preparedness Month, which serves as a reminder for people now and throughout the year to take actions to be prepared and to prepare for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work, learn, and worship. So tell us how New York City has been involved.

Andy Perlman ([02:05](#)):

Sure. The 2021 theme is "Prepare to Protect." Preparing for disasters is protecting everyone you love. This year, New York City Emergency Management has been hosting in-person and virtual events to help New Yorkers, their communities and their businesses be prepared and resilient. Many of our partners, including the American Red Cross, have been participating in National Preparedness Month as well.

Christina Farrell ([02:27](#)):

Thank you Andy. Before we talk about this, I have to say I've been around a long time, but you may have the longest title that I've ever heard.

Andy Perlman ([02:36](#)):

To me, it's what you do, its not what you're called.

Christina Farrell ([02:39](#)):

You're a busy guy. You got it all in there though. But in your role at New York City Emergency Management, as we mentioned, you have a special focus on planning for pets and service animals. So in that vein, what can people do throughout the year to make sure that their pets and service animals are safe when disaster strikes? Also, are there any common misconceptions about pet and service animal preparedness?

Andy Perlman ([03:04](#)):

The best way people can make sure their pets and service animals are safe when emergencies and disasters strike is to make a plan. This includes recording important information about your pet or service animal, including your emergency contacts so that you can easily access that information during an emergency. I recommend that people prepare a Go Bag for their pets or service animals, just like your personal Go Bag. It should include items your pet or service animal needs on a daily basis if they are out of your home with you for at least three days. Dogs and cats should wear a collar or harness, rabies tag, and identification tag at all times. Identification tags should include your name, address, and phone number, and the phone number of an emergency contact. Keep a current color photo of your pet or service animal. This is especially important if you choose to go to an emergency evacuation shelter with your pet. It's also important to think about where you will go and how you will get there, if you have to evacuate with your pet or service animal.

Andy Perlman ([04:04](#)):

Please keep in mind that if an evacuation order is declared, pets are allowed on public transportation, even if they are not in a carrier. Of course, service animals are always allowed on public transportation and any other areas people are allowed. As Christina mentioned, weather emergencies are happening more frequently, as we have seen recently with Tropical Storm Ida and the extreme heat over the summer. Pets and service animals are very susceptible to extreme heat. Never leave pets in the car. Temperatures rise quickly, even with windows down, and that can be deadly for your pet. Call 911 if you see a pet or a child in a hot car. Be sure your pets and service animals have access to plenty of water. Make sure your pets and service animals have plenty of shady places to go when outdoors.

Andy Perlman ([04:52](#)):

Avoid exercising with your pet outside on extremely hot days. If you choose to go to a City cooling center with your pet, please keep in mind there are pet friendly cooling centers in all five boroughs, which we'll talk about in a moment. Of course, service animals are allowed anywhere people are allowed. Christina, you asked about misconceptions people have about pets and service animal programs during emergencies and disasters. The most common misconception is the public thinks that they cannot bring their pets to the City's emergency evacuation shelters, and that means people will

choose to stay home where it's dangerous just to be with their pets. We never want anyone to make that choice. That's why New York City's emergency evacuation shelters are pet-friendly.

Christina Farrell ([05:35](#)):

Thank you, Andy. There's a lot of good tips in there, things I think people might want to go back and replay that section. I have a dog and two guinea pigs and I was just thinking about, do I have current pictures. My guinea pig doesn't- they don't travel that much, but, I was thinking, do I have current pictures and the things that you're saying. So I may have a little homework this weekend. As we mentioned earlier, you're also a member of the City's animal planning taskforce. You've responded to a range of emergencies during your tenure and growing, as we know, and it's fair to say that there are different challenges for each season. For example, we're coming out of the summer, enjoying the cooler fall weather, but we're still in peak hurricane season, as Sandy taught us, and winter will be here before you know it. Can you talk to us a little bit about some of the work the City's animal planning task force does throughout the year and how the task force makes sure that New York City pets and service animals and by extension, their owners, are safe and prepared?

Andy Perlman ([06:34](#)):

Sure. You're right, Christina, the challenges that New Yorkers face are many and often complicated. Just a quick background on what the animal planning task force is. It's a partnership New York City Emergency Management has with non-profit animal welfare groups and City agencies, all unified under the same mission of addressing the issues of people, their pets, and service animals, when planning for and responding to emergencies and disasters. Over the past year and a half, the task force responded to numerous emergencies and disasters that affected a large number of New Yorkers, including their pets and service animals.

Andy Perlman ([07:14](#)):

The task force supported New York when the pandemic began. In April of last year, they launched the New York City COVID-19 pet hotline. This hotline, staffed by one of the taskforce partners served as an information, planning, referral, and service coordination hub for New York City residents who needed support for their pets and service animals during the pandemic. The hotline fielded thousands of calls, hotline call-takers responded to people's questions and concerns about keeping their pets safe during the COVID-19 crisis. They also helped callers identify solutions to meet their own individual needs and connect callers to pet relief resources such as subsidized emergency veterinary care, as well as pet food and supply distribution services. For New York City residents with pets requiring a higher level of care, cases were escalated to a second tier resource desk also managed by other animal planning taskforce partners.

Allison Pennisi ([08:13](#)):

Andy, it's fair to say that the animal planning taskforce has done a tremendous amount of work, especially at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having this COVID-19 pet hotline is certainly a wonderful resource for people that have pets and service animals and need additional help and support during such a critical time. I know that the animal planning task force has actually done a lot of work even over the summer with the pet-friendly cooling centers. Tell us more about that.

Andy Perlman ([08:39](#)):

Sure. The cooling center program is another program that Emergency Management participates in that supports New Yorkers and their pets. As mentioned before, there are many pet-friendly cooling centers, thanks to a recent partnership with Petco. They offered 16 of their locations across all five boroughs as places of respite from extreme heat for people, their pets, and service animals. We are extremely appreciative of Petco for their support. For anyone who chooses to go to a cooling center with their pet or service animal, they can find the nearest cooling center by calling 311, or going to [NYC.gov/coolingcenter](https://nyc.gov/coolingcenter). Please keep in mind the online cooling center finder is only active when the cooling center program is activated.

Andy Perlman ([09:23](#)):

Another way the animal planning task force partners help New Yorkers keep their pets and service animals safe is through community events. Many of the task force partners attended the pets and service animal preparedness event on September 9th in Union Square Park. This is an annual event coordinated by New York City Emergency Management, where people can connect with animal welfare organizations and get emergency preparedness information for their pets and service animals.

Andy Perlman ([09:50](#)):

New York City Emergency Management is also focused on providing emotional support, which directly affects the way people recover from disasters. Therapy dogs provide a tremendous amount of support and comfort to individuals impacted by emergencies and disasters. Thanks to our partnership with The Good Dog Foundation, an organization that trains and provides therapy dogs after disasters, New Yorkers can get some comfort when they need it most. Emergency Managers need that level of support too, the staff here at New York City Emergency Management have been running nonstop for over a year and a half with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather, and other more frequent emergencies, such as fires. Emergency Managers are not immune to stress, therapy dogs have been visiting Emergency Management headquarters, almost daily, providing a few moments of comfort to those that are responsible for providing emergency services to the public. We are grateful to organizations like The Good Dog Foundation, that provide therapy dog support to New Yorkers, as well as New York City's Emergency Management professionals.

Allison Pennisi ([10:58](#)):

I think that's an excellent point. We've brought this up on 'Prep Talk' before, that it's important that we not only make sure that we take care of each other, but we should take care of ourselves and having this resource of the comfort dogs, I can attest to this, that sometimes I think that we're more excited to see dogs than we are seeing human beings. Especially in a time where your mental health and your emotional health, they're paramount and it's important. Like you said, emergency managers, first responders are not immune to the effects and the stress that disasters can bring us as well. So, thank you very much for sharing that. Now, are there resources that our listeners should check out to make sure that they have an emergency plan and any additional resources that you'd like to share or those with pets and service animals?

Andy Perlman ([11:49](#)):

Yeah, the Ready New York program that New York City Emergency Management coordinates has a lot of great resources. In particular there is a, My Pets Emergency Plan. The My Pets Emergency Plan is a workbook that outlines steps pet owners can take to ensure their pets are prepared for all types of emergencies. It's available in 12 languages, as well as audio format. You can go to [NYC.gov/readyny](https://nyc.gov/readyny).

Allison Pennisi ([12:17](#)):

Speaking with Andy Perlman from New York City Emergency Management. For those who have pets and service animals feel free to visit [NYC.gov/readyny](http://NYC.gov/readyny) for more tips and information on how to be prepared. It is rapid response time and if you are a first time listener, it's simple 'Prep Talk' will ask questions and our guest will give the first answer that comes to mind. But before rapid response, here's a message from New York City Emergency Management.

Wes ([12:45](#)):

My name is Wes. I live in Staten Island and I live in zone 6. I first found out that I lived in a zone, prior to hurricane Sandy.

Speaker 6 ([13:00](#)):

A good place to start would be by visiting [NYC.gov/knowyourzone](http://NYC.gov/knowyourzone). You can find information on evacuation centers.

Speaker 7 ([13:08](#)):

There are information about how to keep your pet safe and what to pack during a hurricane and how long typically help could arrive.

Speaker 6 ([13:19](#)):

Another tool that you can use would be signing up for the Notify NYC app. You'll get up to date information on any emergencies throughout the city.

Speaker 7 ([13:29](#)):

Notify NYC provides free alerts and updates daily.

Wes ([13:33](#)):

New Yorkers can receive emergency alerts where it matters most to them. In their workplace or anywhere they are in the city.

Speaker 6 ([13:39](#)):

You can also follow Notify NYC via Twitter.

Speaker 7 ([13:43](#)):

Just be aware that you do have the resources to always be informed.

Speaker 6 ([13:48](#)):

New Yorkers have the power to be prepared for hurricanes.

Speaker 7 ([13:51](#)):

Know your zone, stay informed.

Speaker 8 ([14:00](#)):

You're listening to 'Prep Talk,' the Emergency Management podcast.

Christina Farrell ([14:07](#)):

This is Christina Farrell and Allison Pennisi. We're here with Andy Perlman from New York City Emergency Management, talking about preparedness for a lot of people's favorites, their pets and their service animals. We are now doing rapid response. We will ask a few questions and Andy is going to tell us the first thing that pops into his head. Andy, what is your top emergency preparedness tip?

Andy Perlman ([14:34](#)):

Wow, there are so many. But, if I was pressed to give my top tip, I would say if you're being told to evacuate due to an extreme weather event or some other hazard, please take it seriously. The City's evacuation shelters, as I mentioned before, are pet friendly so you don't have to stay home where it's unsafe because you want to stay with your pet. Also, being prepared is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and of course your pet and service animal. So please make a Go Bag for your family, and that includes your pet or service animal.

Allison Pennisi ([15:08](#)):

I love it. Andy, this is a tough question, or may be a tough question for you. Are you a dog person or a cat person?

Andy Perlman ([15:16](#)):

That is a tough question. But, if I had to pick one, I am definitely a dog person.

Christina Farrell ([15:21](#)):

All right. The great dog, cat debate. Like I said, I have guinea pigs, I might throw them in there. I have to tell you, guinea pigs are extremely cute and low maintenance. There is not a lot of... you're not walking them, you only clean their cage a couple of times a week, and they're very cuddly and like to chirp. So, I highly recommend guinea pigs. Andy, we know this may also be tough given all the hats you wear and everything you have going on, but give it your best shot. Can you sum up the work you do in one word?

Andy Perlman ([15:51](#)):

Oh, Christina, that's a tough one. One word. Well, if I had to pick one word, I guess it would be "collaboration." It's just very important in the work that we do.

Christina Farrell ([16:02](#)):

I agree. I think that that is a great word and a great concept. Andy, thank you for taking a little time out to come and talk to us. As you mentioned, and I know there are different types of evacuation, but I wanted to stress a couple things. First of all, the great partnership that you and your team have forged with Petco and with The Good Dog Foundation, having these additional resources to help emergency management staff and to help pet lovers during the summer months have really been terrific and a great addition. I also wanted to stress that pets are able to come to evacuation, they're welcome at emergency evacuation shelters, which is something people may not realize and it's a very important fact, because we don't want anyone to endanger their wellbeing because they think they have to choose between safety and their pet. That's not the situation and we are able to accommodate pets during emergency. But thank you. Is there anything you'd like to add?

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Andy Perlman ([17:05](#)):

Not really, Christina. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about how important it is to include pets and service animals in the planning. Because if we're not planning for pets and service animals, we're really not planning adequately for the people. They shouldn't be separate, they're altogether.

Christina Farrell ([17:21](#)):

I couldn't agree more. Allison.

Allison Pennisi ([17:24](#)):

Thank you, Andy. A reminder for our listeners, you can get emergency preparedness tips for yourself and for your pets and service animals by visiting [NYC.gov/readyny](https://www.nyc.gov/readyny). Getting a copy of a Ready New York guide, including the, My Pets Emergency Plan at any time, or you can also call 311. Thank you, Andy.

Andy Perlman ([17:44](#)):

You're welcome.

Speaker 1 ([17:50](#)):

That's this episode of 'Prep Talk.' If you like what you heard, you can listen anytime online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.