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Dimensions of the Human-Animal Bond and Evacuation Decisions among Pet Owners during Hurricane Ike

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Source: [Anthrozoos: A Multidisciplinary Journal of The Interactions of People & Animals](#), Volume 25, Number 2, June 2012, pp. 229-238(10)

Publisher: [Berg Publishers](#)

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Abstract:

The events of Hurricane Katrina focused attention on the plight of companion animals and their human guardians during disasters. One result was the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act of 2006. Hurricane Ike, one of the first mass evacuation events after the legislation was signed into law, provided an opportunity to examine pet owner evacuation in a post-Katrina PETS Act environment. The relationships between two dimensions of the human-animal bond—attachment and commitment—and evacuation decisions among pet owners were examined using the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS) and the Miller-Rada Commitment to Pets Scale (CPS). A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to a sample of pet-owning residents in zip codes that had been under mandatory evacuation order. One hundred and twenty valid responses were received. Descriptive and bi-variate statistics and logistic regressions were conducted. The two dimensions of the human-animal bond were positively correlated. The results of the logistic regression found people with higher levels of commitment had lower odds of evacuation, but the level of attachment did not predict human evacuation. Pets were noted to influence decisions among people who evacuated, as well as people who did not. Contrary to the changes expected under the PETS Act, the relationship between the human-animal bond and evacuation decisions was found to be consistent with pre-PETS Act research.

Keywords: [DISASTER](#); [EVACUATION](#); [HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND](#); [HURRICANE IKE](#); [PETS EVACUATION AND TRANSPORTATION STANDARDS \(PETS\) ACT](#)

Document Type: Research article

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/175303712X13316289505503>

Publication date: 2012-06-01

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