

## **PREPARE FOR THAT DOG EMERGENCY**

**BY KATIE EDWARDS**

Last year, at a well attended dog show circuit, a lady knocked on my motorhome door and asked for help with a motorhome full of a dozen purebred dogs. The person knocking was a Dane owner – bless her – that spotted a need and decided to act on her own to help out.

It seems an age 60's plus lady in a large motorhome was parked near the Dane owner. The Dane person noticed a younger couple drive up, knock on the door, then enter – soon after an ambulance arrived and the older lady was taken away. From what little information we could gather – the couple that came to visit didn't know the lady well, just heard she would be in town and since they all had similar breed interests, was invited to the motorhome. It was a good thing they showed up as they found the older woman collapsed and unconscious on the bathroom floor. The woman was traveling alone. Who knows how long she would have lain there had they not arrived?

After the ambulance left all was quiet at the motorhome, but our Dane person did not see anyone enter after that. She waited a while and was aware there were dogs still inside the rig. Were they going to be taken care of? Did they have water? Noone came. Lucky for her x-pens had already been set up outside the motorhome making her self imposed responsibility somewhat easier. Entering the motorhome she found numerous dogs of a single breed in stacked cages acting anxious and immediately started taking them out to the x-pens – much to the dog's relief. None of the cages were labeled in any way. Not knowing dog names or who could be with whom, there was a lot of looking underneath so as not to put 2 males or 2 females together..... and a lot observation and hoping that noone was in heat. Water was dispensed, and, since this is a heavily coated breed – she made sure the x-pens were shaded. There was also 2 puppies probably not over 10 weeks old – happy as they could be – that loved every bit of attention they received.

The older lady's cell phone was found in the motorhome with her son's name and number in it so he was notified. Between the motorhome license plates and her son we realized that this lady was a long way from home - she lived many, many states away. Her son got on the ball and made arrangements for the dogs to go to a boarding kennel.

Another recent incident was a horrendous accident when a handler's rig was cut off by a semi. There were serious injuries. One dog got loose but was tracked down by volunteers afterwards. Another incident involved a breeder driving a box van driving near a semi on a two lane highway. The semi chose that moment to blow a tire and a piece of steel belted radial flew up under the box van, cut the breeder's fuel line and the van was immediately on fire. She quickly pulled over and began hauling dogs out of the box van. Lucky for her some semi drivers stopped and helped her do this. This breeder carries all her dogs in crates (smart woman!) which eliminates trying to grab scared dogs to clip a leash on them during dire circumstances. That van burned in less time than you might think.

What this teaches us is that anything can happen at any time. With our aging population we need to be more prepared than ever. Here are some precautions we can do to help both your dogs and anyone that has to step into the role of "helper" or in these cases "godsend."

1. Post the names/ descriptions of the dogs you are traveling with inside the door of your trailer/RV in a plastic sleeve. Information regarding who is to be kept separate, feeding schedule, special medications – anything needed to make a similar situation like this easier for a

**stranger stepping in to help. Have vaccination information readily available for others to find in case dogs need to be boarded/cared for without question.**

**2. You likely have an ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in your phone right? (and if not why not?) Add ICE-DOGS with a reachable person's numbers who has knowledge of your dogs. Make sure this person has a Power of Attorney form for authorization of dog/vet care that can be faxed. Many fire/policemen now look for ICE numbers to help notify family members. You can also place it on the back of your phone using a label printer.**

**3. Place an "In Case of Emergency" card in your wallet – preferably by your license. Put in front of your license: "HELP MY ANIMALS" with your car/make/model number/license plate number on it so if your dogs are in a parking lot – they can be found. This is in case you passed out in a mall, restaurant or some other similar place.**

**4. I don't allow my dogs to romp and play with collars on but if dogs are traveling with collars, have your cell number on tags on the collars. Have recent photos of your dogs. In case of a dog loss while traveling, you'll have pictures available for immediate posters, online posting, etc.**

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