

National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP)
Current Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management

Mass Care and Sheltering





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Preface

The evolution of disaster response over the last decade was the catalyst for revising animal emergency management practices. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Animal Care funded a cooperative agreement with the University of Kentucky.

This agreement was to collaborate with the National Alliance of State Animal and Agriculture Emergency Programs (NASAAEP), the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and other key stakeholders to update, consolidate, and create animal emergency management best practices.

The 2023 NASAAEP Current Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management documents are the result of extensive work by subject matter experts (SMEs) over a 24-month period. Document topics and content development were guided by the Best Practices Working Group (BPWG) Steering Committee and subjected to a rigorous external peer review process. The documents include:

- Incident Command and Coordination
- Planning and Resource Management
- Community Engagement and Outreach
- Animal Search and Rescue
- Disaster Veterinary Medical Response
- Decontamination
- Household Pet Evacuation and Transportation
- Equine Evacuation and Transportation
- Mass Care and Sheltering

NOTE: Links to external resources are denoted by underlined text.

The core planning team gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions of everyone who provided time, expertise, and resources for the development and review of these documents.

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Executive Summary

Emergency animal mass care and sheltering has received considerable attention over the last two decades as an important element of emergency management. In 2006, the Stafford Act was amended to integrate addressing the needs of pet and service animal owners and their animals as necessary elements of State, Tribal, Territorial, and local emergency operations plans.

Since then, supporting resources for developing and implementing emergency animal shelters have expanded dramatically and best practices have been identified in two previous efforts, also supported by cooperative funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and expertise from many partner organizations.

Some of the elements of national policy that currently support animal mass care and sheltering include:

- National Response Framework including Emergency Support Function #6 Annex and Emergency Support Function #11 Annex
- FEMA Comprehensive Planning Guidance 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans

In addition, the National Mass Care Strategy website contains a section focused on animal mass care and sheltering resources. The broad focus area of animal mass care and sheltering contains the following core missions:

- Shelter-in-place support for animals:
 - Points of distribution that include animal food and supplies. This can include distribution through food banks, animal shelters, or "pet pantries"
 - In some cases, animals may be fed in-place while the owners are still evacuated, as well.
- Congregate emergency animal sheltering, potentially including animal-only emergency shelters, colocated shelters that allow people and animals to be sheltered near each other, or cohabitated shelters in which people and animals are together in one space.
- Non-congregate animal sheltering (hotels, campgrounds, or other individual family accommodations that include pets).
- Donations management: Integrating animal issues into the jurisdictional donations management team.
- Owner-animal reunification
- Transitional housing that accommodates the needs of families with animals

Emergency managers should start the process of accommodating the needs of people with household pets, service animals and other animals through identifying a lead



jurisdictional organization for animal issues as well as identifying stakeholder organizations/agencies that bring subject matter expertise and resources to the planning table.

Local emergency operations plans should integrate these animal mass care and sheltering issues into the jurisdictional plans and planning partners should develop teams, resources, and operational plans for delivering mass care and sheltering support (along with other animal emergency management missions).

This document includes many resources that can help develop and manage teams, and information pertaining to the command and coordination of animal-related response and support missions.

How to Use This Document

The document contains a great deal of detail, particularly in the operational sections and the appendices. While emergency managers may only need to examine the first parts of this document, more detailed information is provided for those who are developing and managing the animal mass care and sheltering operational missions.

Introduction

The Emergency Animal Mass Care and Sheltering mission parallels much, but not all, of the mission areas covered in Federal Emergency Support Function #6, Mass Care, Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing (ESF #6 Annex), including (FEMA, 2016):

- Shelter-in-place support
- Providing animal feed, supplies and critical services to households sheltering-in-place with animals
 - Points of distribution – incorporating animal food and supplies
 - Donations management
 - Door-to-door support for animals of people with disabilities or special needs who remain at their home but with limited services or utilities
- Non-congregate animal sheltering: Owners and animals are provided individual housing together, such as in pet-friendly hotel accommodations
- Congregate emergency animal sheltering
- Animal-only shelter: Fixed or temporary emergency shelter for animals with most of the animal care provided by staff and volunteers. In some cases, local animal shelters or animal control facilities may provide this service.
 - Contract care, such as from veterinary clinics or boarding kennels is not included in this document but may be an excellent choice for many families.
- Cohabitated shelter: Temporary emergency shelter for people and their animals sharing the same space and owners provide most of the animal care.
- Collocated shelter: Temporary emergency animal shelter near a human emergency shelter in which owners provide much of the care for animals.
- Reunification of pets and other animals with owners/families
- Returning animals at emergency sheltering location to their owner/families.
- Assisting in community animal lost and found efforts.
- Transitional animal sheltering/housing
- Suitable temporary housing for pets after leaving emergency sheltering (with or without the owner).

Authorities

The lead Federal agency for this mission area is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6. Additional support is provided by ESF #11 Agriculture and Natural Resources, and ESF #8, Public Health and Medical Services.



Federal roles are generally to support State, Local, Tribal, or Territorial agencies (SLTT) and to work with non-governmental organizations in supporting this mission area. The Red Cross has a Congressional mandate to support human mass care and sheltering services nationwide. Animal mass care and sheltering support is not invested in a single nationwide organization but is often led locally by government agencies (such as Animal Control) or local non-governmental partners/volunteers.

The Pet Evacuation and Transportation Act of 2006 amended the Robert T. Stafford Act (the primary emergency management statute for the Federal government) mandates accommodation of the needs of people with household pets and service animals in SLTT emergency plans.

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines service animals and provides certain protections for people with service animals. Service animals are trained to mitigate challenges to essential functions for their owners and, by law, every effort should be made to keep service with their owners.

The Fair Housing Act defines assistance animals, which include service animals (see above) as well as emotional support animals. Emotional support animals are not specifically trained to mitigate challenges, but their presence helps assist owners with coping with mental health challenges. Assistance animals must be allowed in rented or leased housing, although at the time of this writing, no final decision has been announced as to whether that includes emergency sheltering.

Regardless of legal status, these animals provide an essential service to their owners: A best practice is to allow service animals, assistance animals, and emotional support animals to remain with their people unless the animals are disruptive, or the species of animals cannot be supported in the mass care housing available.

State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial authorities for mass care and sheltering missions may vary considerably but are typically detailed in the jurisdiction Emergency Operations Plan. The Red Cross is a primary partner for human mass care and sheltering missions in many SLTT jurisdictional plans. A jurisdictional agency or partner organization may be designated as the lead agency for animal mass care and sheltering and the agency designated may vary considerably among jurisdictions.

Many jurisdictional statutes and regulations address pets and other animals in day-to-day frameworks, such as animal control/stray animal issues, animal disease management, stray livestock, etc. Some jurisdictions have implemented disaster-specific statutes or regulations that provide a clear jurisdictional responsibility pertaining



to animals in disasters. Jurisdictional emergency planners should identify jurisdictional laws that apply to animal mass care and sheltering and ensure that partners in the jurisdictional animal plan are fully informed, trained, and exercised about such authorities and responsibilities.

Additionally, jurisdictions should identify challenges pertaining to managing emergency animal sheltering that are not addressed in statute or regulation. For example, a community may have a 5-day holding period for owners to redeem their pets from Animal Control facilities, but does this apply to animals displaced by disasters, or do lost-property statutes apply? If pets are unclaimed from emergency animal shelters, how long will they be held before other disposition, such as adoption?

Key Planning Assumptions

Owners have the primary responsibility for the care of animals during disasters. In most disasters, however, some owners will need assistance in finding care and shelter for themselves and their animals due to severe personal impacts.

The Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act) of 2006 amended the Robert T. Stafford Act to include mandates for SLTT emergency operations plans to accommodate the needs of people with pets and service animals, and the needs of the animals, including evacuation, sheltering and other needs.

Studies have indicated that a significant number of people will refuse to evacuate if services are not provided to include pets. Owners may refuse to evacuate or may refuse to enter traditional sheltering, choosing to sleep in their vehicles with pets despite security hazards or weather conditions.

The Stafford Act identifies a priority for the management of household pets and service animals, but other animal types are commonly in need of assistance during disasters. Backyard livestock, exotic pets, reptiles, crustaceans, and even fish may be evacuated by owners. Jurisdictions and their response partners must decide how to manage other types of animals that may be presented with by their owners. The failure to accept and care for any animals presented will affect citizens' willingness to comply with emergency management instructions to evacuate or seek shelter.

Failure to accommodate both people and animals has historically been linked to evacuation failure, which puts owners, responders, and animals at greater risk, and can potentially create unintended cascading effects in the incident. During disasters, keeping families together with their pets reduces stress and anxiety and often supports a more efficient and effective response.



Animal sheltering beyond that for pets with their owners, such as animal control animals and livestock, requires additional planning and coordination. An animal-only shelter is always required to care for stray or quarantined animals and owned animals that, for medical or behavioral reasons, are unsuited for either cohabitated or collocated sheltering.

Jurisdictions can minimize the staffing needs for animal sheltering by also utilizing cohabitated (least staff intensive) or collocated (less staff intensive) sheltering models in situations where owners can maintain responsibility for the care of their animals.

In addition to planning for various types of emergency animal sheltering, other “wrap-around” mass care services, according to the National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster, may be needed. Examples of wrap-around services include:

- Day care for animals of people who need to leave a collocated or cohabitated shelter, or non-congregate sheltering for a while and pets cannot be left unattended
- Veterinary support for people with pets in shelters if community veterinary services are disrupted
- Ensuring availability of pet and animal supplies (food, water, litter, crates, leashes, bowls, etc.) to people housed with their pets in congregate or non-congregate shelters, or sheltering-in-place

Mass care planning must include planning for animal disposition for unclaimed animals and animals relinquished by their owners due to the circumstances of the disaster. Separating people from their animals during emergency sheltering and temporary housing has been shown to result in higher animal relinquishment rates and the need for increased animal disposition response services.

Many, if not most of the animal emergency management mass care and sheltering missions will be conducted or strongly supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and volunteers. Strong jurisdictional relationships with NGOs are essential. Some jurisdictions have created Community/County/State Animal Response Team programs (CART/SART/or using a wide range of nomenclature). Organizations may be led by government agencies or may be an NGO partner. Utilizing such relationships in planning is essential.

When possible, integrate animal mass care services with human services. For example, management and execution of animal commodity distribution should be fully integrated with human commodity distribution for efficient utilization of responder resources and to facilitate “one-stop shopping” for survivors.



Clear and effective messaging about available animal services and species accepted will facilitate citizen compliance with emergency management instructions. Media and social media monitoring with active “rumor control” protocols to address misinformation will further facilitate an effective mass care response.

In large-scale disasters that receive a Presidential disaster declaration, the jurisdictional costs for pet sheltering and other mass care activities may be partially reimbursable under FEMA’s Public Assistance Program.

The animal authority and emergency management agency within the jurisdiction will need to ensure that appropriate documentation of actual costs, as well as volunteer hours and donated products, are maintained and FEMA deadlines are met to seek reimbursement.



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Planning, Preparedness, Command, and Coordination

With any major disaster, government at all levels must deal with the limitations of what it can do to respond quickly and effectively. Federal and state governments can expand their reach and deliver services more efficiently by working with individuals, institutions, and groups that are already active in the affected areas (FEMA, 2021).

Operational Planning – All Elements of Emergency Animal Mass Care and Sheltering

The Planning Process

The key element to operational planning for mass care missions is stakeholder engagement in the planning process. The first steps are securing the engagement/support of the jurisdictional emergency management agency and identifying the lead jurisdictional authority for animal mass care and sheltering services (often Animal Control) as well as critical/core partners (such as the jurisdictional animal sheltering agency/partner, veterinary medical professionals, Cooperative Extension, and other key entities).

The planning process is described in detail in the Animal Emergency Management Planning and Resource Management Best Practice document. The Planning Appendix contains some examples of jurisdictional planning partners. Animal mass care and sheltering planning should be done as an element of the overall jurisdictional animal emergency management plan.

Estimate Animal Populations

Jurisdictions should consider all animal populations within the jurisdiction and what percentage of people with animals may need mass care assistance. Additional information on animal population estimation can be found in the Planning Appendix.

Pre-Incident Agreements

SLTT and non-governmental organizations should identify and execute all necessary agreements and contracts during the planning phase pertaining to emergency animal mass care and sheltering. Such actions could include:

- Identifying existing mutual aid agreements, including statewide master mutual aid agreements
- Sign agreements with non-governmental partners that identify roles, cost management or reimbursement, etc., incident reporting requirements, etc.
- Establish or utilize existing volunteer management systems, when appropriate



Facility Identification and Agreements

- Lease or use agreements for use (if applicable)
- Determining facility infrastructure and resource requirements
- Restoration terms are essential to such agreements

Animal Evacuation and Transportation

- May bring people and/or animals to emergency sheltering locations
- May be engaged in moving sheltered animals to a new location(s), such as when a shelter becomes full, multiple shelters are consolidated as sheltered animal populations decline, or an animal requires veterinary care that isn't available on site.
- Information on animal evacuation and transportation may be found in the Evacuation and Transportation Best Practices document.

Animal Search and Rescue (ASAR)

- May bring animals to emergency animal sheltering locations
- ASAR feeding-in-place teams may need assistance in securing animal feed and supplies (donations or purchased items), or mass care support for designated rescue drop-off locations
- Information on animal search and rescue may be found in the Emergency Animal Decontamination Best Practices document.

Animal Decontamination

- Incoming animals from disaster areas could need decontamination (if necessary and if not conducted before arrival for emergency sheltering). Animal decontamination teams may be managed separately from animal sheltering teams, or an animal decontamination team may be assigned under an animal sheltering team.
- Hazards could include chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, or mixed hazards such as debris or floodwaters.
- Information on animal decontamination may be found in the Emergency Animal Decontamination Best Practices document.

Veterinary Medical Response

- Veterinary medical support is critical to emergency animal sheltering of all kinds.
- While some limited veterinary information is provided in this document, readers should utilize the Disaster Veterinary Medical Response Best Practices document for detailed information on veterinary issues, including biosecurity, disease prevention, veterinary triage, diagnosis and treatment, outbreak management, euthanasia, carcass management, and other topics.

Command and Coordination

Those developing jurisdictional or organizational animal sheltering teams or non-sheltering mass care capabilities must have a working knowledge of the fundamentals of:

- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS)
- Jurisdictional Coordination Center operations (also termed Emergency Operations Center or EOC)

FEMA fully covers NIMS, ICS, and EOC operations, on their website, as well as offers independent study courses on these topics. Additionally, these fundamentals are addressed in more detail in the following Best Practices documents:

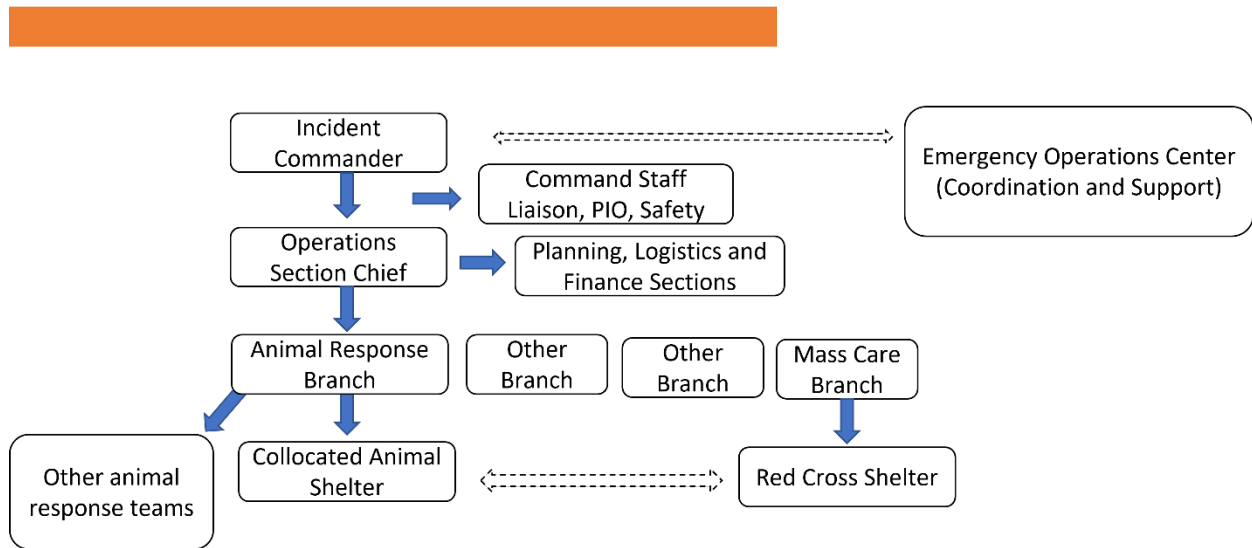
- Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management – Incident Command and Coordination
- Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management – Planning and Resource Management

Meetings with the lead jurisdictional agency for animal issues and the jurisdictional emergency manager are critical conversations in planning, developing, and maintaining this mission area. Animal mass care and sheltering should be a key element of the animal response part of the jurisdictional emergency operations plan.

Animal mass care and sheltering missions should either be attached to the jurisdictionally authorized Incident Command System, generally to the Operations Section, or coordinated through the jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center. There are many ways to organize a response and the jurisdiction needs to determine what best facilitates an effective and efficient response.

Options include assigning animal mass care response activities within an Animal Branch or Group, or functionally under a Mass Care Branch or Group. In other cases, an Operational Task Force might be developed at a location, such as a local fairground, with both human and animal sheltering occurring under the supervision of a Task Force leader in charge of the site.

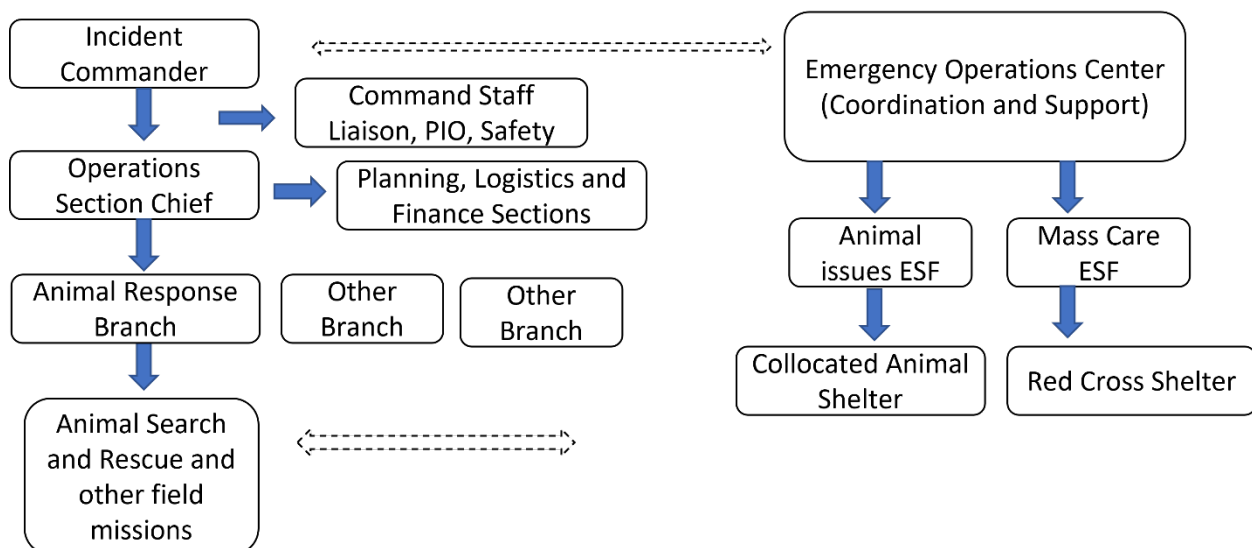
Additionally, an emergency animal shelter management team can utilize ICS principles and position terminology to manage the shelter. In such circumstances, it's important to not refer to the Shelter Manager as "Incident Commander," which is a term that refers to the person (or people in a Unified Command) assigned to manage the entire incident. Two diagrams are provided below as examples, although the exact organizational relationship may vary between jurisdictions and between incidents.



In the figure above, the Incident Commander oversees all incident response and works closely with a jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center, which provides coordination of community resources and support.

A collocated animal shelter is activated. The shelter manager reports to an Animal Response Branch Manager, who reports to the ICS Operations Section Chief, who reports to the Incident Commander. The collocated shelter works closely with the management of the Red Cross Shelter for people, including pet owners.

The actual position of the collocated animal shelter might vary somewhat within the ICS structure depending on the incident and jurisdiction. This is just one example.



In this above graphic, the Incident command continues to manage all response, including some animal field operations such as animal search and rescue, but the mass



care services have been designated a support activity and assigned to the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Many EOCs use Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to organize their efforts and the animal ESF might be 6, 11, or another. Some local EOCs do not use ESF terminology, and the shelters could simply connect to the animal desk at the local EOC. As before, the animal shelter manager works closely with the human shelter in providing services. The key point is that there are many ways jurisdictions manage mass care efforts and each jurisdiction will need to determine how best to integrate animal mass care within their operational structure.

While these diagrams provide just two examples among many, those planning emergency animal mass care services need to have a working understanding of NIMS, ICS, and EOC operations. If the animal shelter team is from outside the jurisdiction (mutual aid, national NGO, etc.) then they must identify where those operations are located within the Incident Command or EOC hierarchy.

Within a jurisdiction, animal response planning should discuss where animal mass care and sheltering missions will likely be placed in the incident command and/or EOC organizations.

Mass Care Task Forces – Integration of Animal Issues

In larger incidents, particularly those with state and federal engagement, Mass Care Task Forces may be established with participants from key SLTT, federal, and NGOs to coordinate actions of all the different partners in a specific sector of mass care. Actual Task Forces developed may vary with the incident and circumstances, but may include:

- Sheltering (immediate/non-congregate or congregate)
- Feeding
- Housing (transitional and long-term housing)
- Reunification
- Commodity Distribution
- Pets/animals (or, to facilitate a fully integrated and coordinated response, pets and animals may be integrated within the above functional mass care task forces)

In some cases, a separate pet/animal task force may be established and in other cases, pet/animal issues may be integrated into the other task forces. While not every incident will involve these mass care task forces, when present, collaboration through these interagency coordination task forces is essential to optimally addressing the needs of people with animals.

The following diagram is an example of a more complex incident where several Mass Care Task Forces have been established that engage critical SLTT, Federal, and NGO partners. In this scenario, Incident Command may be established in multiple jurisdictions along with multiple EOCs.

At various locations, there are animal-only shelters, colocated shelters, cohabitated shelters, points of distribution, people and pets in hotels, pet pantries, food banks, reunification/lost and found efforts, and other wrap-around services. Mass care task forces may be established to coordinate across the entire area of the incident and many jurisdictions and partners.

There could be a pet/animal task force to enhance overall coordination and support. mass care task forces do not manage the response in the field but support that effort with resources and expertise. As an incident grows larger, the mass care and sheltering response grows very complex. While each jurisdiction needs to build its animal mass care and sheltering response capabilities, all response partners need to work with each other to be effective.

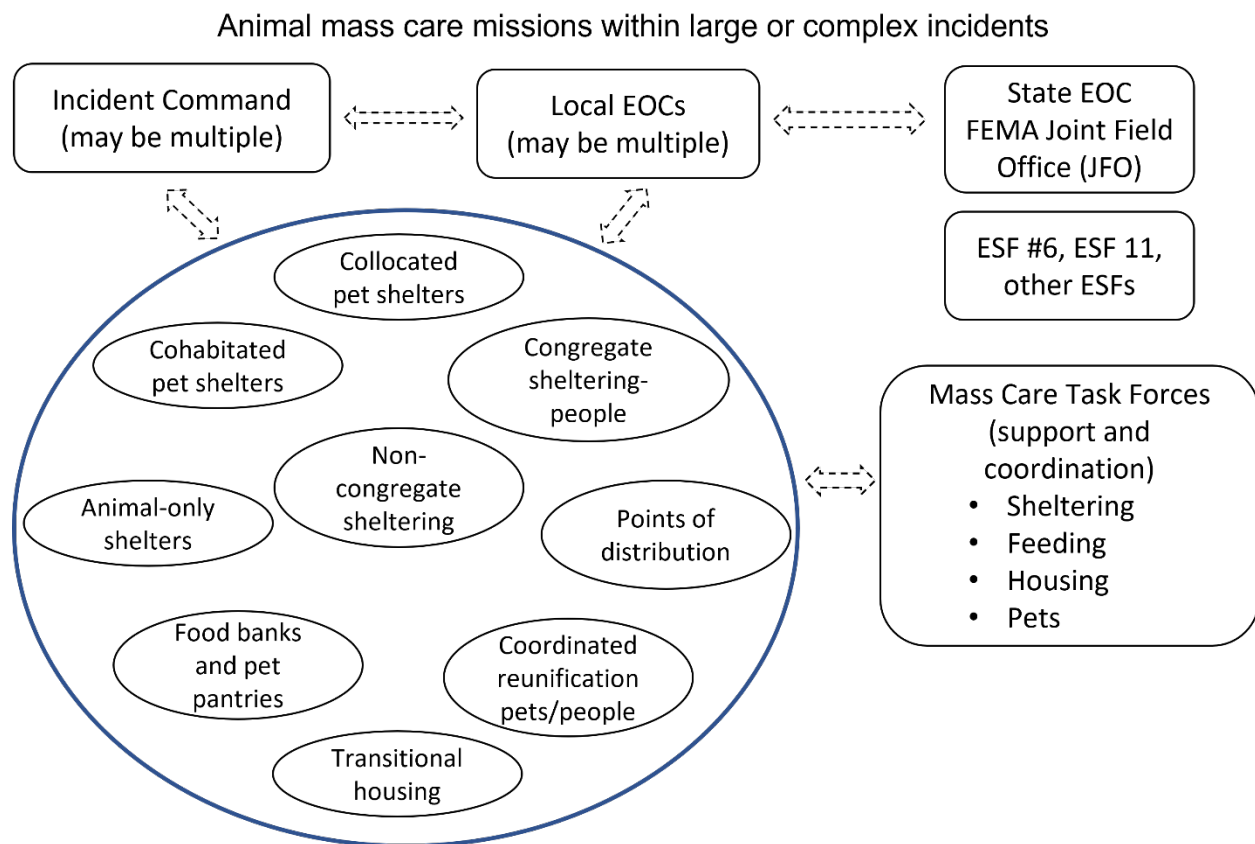




Figure above: Example of the scope of mass care for people and pets in a complex major disaster, with Mass Care Task Forces supporting and coordinating the entire mass care effort across various jurisdictions and incorporating many NGO partners. Whether the mass care efforts are under the ICS structure or reporting to the local EOC could vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Mass Care Task Forces provide a mechanism to coordinate with and support all those efforts at the level of the State EOC and FEMA Joint Field Office. Each of the four Mass Care Task Forces would also coordinate with each other. Mass Care Task Forces do not provide tactical command of the various mass care and sheltering efforts, which continue to be managed by the appropriate jurisdictions.

In some cases, however, the State or FEMA may operate some of the mass care missions, large-scale pet shelter(s), or Points of Distribution, but the Mass Care Task Forces support these as well, rather than command.

Situational Assessment and Reporting

Planning processes and expectations for situational assessment and reporting are critical to all aspects of animal emergency management, including mass care and sheltering. Mission planning should include planning what information and data will be reported, how often, and to what agency.

All elements of animal mass care and sheltering have a critical responsibility to provide situational assessments and report mass care statistics up through their chain of command (ICS organization or EOC). Accurate and timely reporting allows for better overall incident management and coordination, provides a common operating picture, allows agency executives and political leaders to better support animal mission needs, and helps to document animal issues.

Documentation of response efforts and costs becomes critical for purposes of FEMA cost-sharing programs or to help secure additional funding/donations. In very large incidents, accurate reporting from many local jurisdictions helps build a state, regional, or national operating picture on animal issues and facilitates the resolution of challenges and resource needs.

Situational assessment information may include elements such as:

- Anticipated challenges, projection of the future need for animal mass care or sheltering, and at what level
- Projected animal issues or cascading effects
- Resource needs

- Current and future cost estimates
- Anticipated mission demobilization timeline
- Reports should include elements such as:
- Once daily status report

Relevant statistics may include:

- Numbers and types of animals in shelters in relation to the capacity of the shelter (100 animals, 200 capacity)
- Staff levels
- Distribution locations and the amounts of animal food and supplies distributed
- Number of pets/animals returned to owners
- Other information pertaining to wrap-around services and coordination with human mass care efforts

Resource Typing

FEMA updated animal emergency management resource types in 2018. Resource typing and individual credentialing are tools to enhance the development of resources as well as to support more effective sharing of resources between organizations and jurisdictions.

A complete discussion of resource typing can be found in the *NASAAEP 2023 Current Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management Planning and Resource Management* document.

The following positions or teams may be utilized to support emergency animal mass care and sheltering:

- Animal Behavior Specialist
- Animal Care and Handling Specialist
- Animal Control/Humane Officer
- Animal Decontamination Specialist
- Animal Emergency Response Shelter Manager
- Animal Emergency Response Team Leader
- Animal Evacuation, Transport, and Re-Entry Team
- Animal Intake and Reunification Specialist
- Animal Sheltering Team - Animal-Only Shelter
- Animal Sheltering Team - Cohabitated Shelter
- Animal Sheltering Team - Collocated Shelter
- Veterinarian
- Veterinary Assistant
- Veterinary Medical Team



Resource types are a tool to standardize response resources and establish minimum criteria across jurisdictions to facilitate resource sharing across jurisdictional lines and ensure that requested resources come with the capacity and capabilities needed to address a jurisdiction's response needs.

Fully utilizing resource types is not a requirement and may be challenging in smaller jurisdictions or those that are just getting started in team development. When requesting resources from outside of the jurisdiction (within state, state-to-state via EMAC, or from NGOs), requesting a typed individual or team (such as a Type 1 Animal Intake and Reunification Specialist or a Type 2 Animal Sheltering Team – Collocated Shelter) provides a “short cut” to requesting the needed personnel and resources.

Coordination of Animal Issues with Agencies and Organizations Supporting General Mass Care Services

Many, if not most, general mass care operations are conducted by non-governmental organizations ranging from small local organizations to very large national organizations, such as the Red Cross.

The organization National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is a coalition of national organizations that support emergency response. NVOAD provides a mechanism for collaboration, communication, and coordination among groups as well as a forum for interfacing with FEMA and other Federal agencies.

Nationally, there is a significant interface between national animal organizations and National VOAD and its members. States and territories may also have VOAD organizations that perform similar coordination. A list of State and Territory VOADs can be found at: <https://www.nvoad.org/state-territory-voad/>

Tribal or local jurisdictions may also have VOAD type organizations, sometimes termed “community organizations active in disaster.” While there is no ready list of such organizations, local emergency management agencies can generally identify if such an organization exists in their jurisdiction.

Animal mass care and sheltering organizations need to join (or establish a working relationship) with the VOAD type organizations and non-governmental human mass care organizations in the jurisdiction. Many VOAD organizational members (or local response NGOs, if no VOAD exists) can work with animal organizations to improve the whole community's support for people and animals.



In some circumstances, VOAD partners can assist animal organizations with services such as warehousing, logistics, critical incident stress management, etc. This whole community approach can:

- Identify critical animal response issues, including their impact on human survivor recovery.
- Recognize common intersection points of human and animal response and recovery activities.
- Enhance and encourage stronger relationships between human and animal disaster relief organizations, addressing unmet needs during response and recovery.
- Minimize duplication of effort for parallel activities and services provided for both humans and animals.
- Support better access to resources and assistance that are essential for all households, including those with pets or other animals.
- Within the animal response sector, many national non-governmental animal response organizations have formed the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition, which is similar to the National VOAD. More information on NARSC is available at www.thenarsc.org.

Liability Considerations

SLTT and non-governmental partners should examine the complicated liability issues impacting emergency management in general and specifically animal mass care and sheltering. Management of liability may be impacted by statutes, insurance policies, operational policies, supervisory actions, and training. Jurisdictional and organizational legal advisors should be engaged to analyze these issues. Examples of basic questions include:

- What happens if someone (or an animal) becomes ill or is hurt or killed?
- What happens if an animal escapes or is lost?
- What happens if a responder makes a mistake causing property damage or injury?
- What happens if a survivor/owner fails to pick up their animal when expected?

Mass care staff and volunteers have regular contact with survivors, including children. Will the jurisdiction or organization utilize criminal and sexual offender background checks to screen individual volunteers/responders?

Moving Adoptable Shelter Pets Out of the Disaster Zone

A best practice strategy used in disasters is to move adoptable, healthy pets from community animal shelters to other communities for adoption. If it's possible to clear the existing jurisdictional shelters of adoptable animals before an incident (such as pre-



landfall with a hurricane), this safeguards the animals from harm from the impending storm and frees up most, if not all, of the shelters' resources to assist with disaster impacted animals.

This practice is common nationwide as a strategy to move adoptable, healthy pets from overcrowded shelters to shelters in another city or another state that have much lower inventories of adoptable pets. Several organizations have purpose-built vehicles that can move dozens of animals between shelters for this purpose. By removing adoptable pets from the local shelter(s), shelters have more capacity to shelter pets from the disaster as well as more staff availability for response.

This practice should be investigated during the planning phase and relationships developed with peer shelters in the region and with national organizations to facilitate such movements when appropriate.

Equipment and Supplies

- Pre-incident cache development:
- Multiple communities across the nation have created emergency caches of companion animal sheltering equipment, most often in cargo trailers, but such caches could be stored in a fixed location as well.
- The size of the cache is community-dependent but could range from being able to supply 50 or fewer animals to extremely large caches found in some hurricane-impacted states which may have equipment and supplies for thousands of pets. The larger the projected animal sheltering need, the more critical the process of cache development.
- The composition of sheltering caches can vary with the needs of the organization or jurisdiction and the funding available to develop the cache. Generally, caches contain non-perishable items, with perishable items such as pet food, water, medications, etc. added from fresh stock upon deployment.
- Environmental conditions within cargo trailers or other storage locations should be considered as extreme heat or cold could have negative impacts on some supplies, such as disinfectants, tape, computers, cameras, printers, etc. Such caches commonly include:
 - Cages: wire crates or airline kennels of varying sizes
 - Food and water bowls, litter pans, leashes, temporary ID collars
 - Cleaning equipment and supplies
 - Animal handling equipment
 - Office equipment, supplies, forms, and signage materials
 - Personal protective equipment, barrier tape, traffic cones, safety vests
 - Electrical, fans, heaters, lights, tables chairs

- Just-in-time additions: food, water, laptop, printer, digital camera, veterinary medications
- The American Kennel Club, through their AKC Reunite program, has donated over 100 Pet Disaster Relief trailers to communities across the nation. More information on trailer contents and the program can be found at <https://www.akcreunite.org/relief/>.
- Other sources of funding for animal sheltering caches have included, State, Tribal, Territorial or local funding, Homeland Security grants, grant-making foundations, non-governmental organizational fund raising or donations,
- Example lists of equipment and supplies for emergency animal sheltering can be found from multiple sources.

A best practice strategy is to ensure that a jurisdiction has sufficient crates and leashes on hand within the jurisdiction, along with a trailer or other means to quickly move the cache items to designated shelter locations, to meet projected community emergency animal sheltering needs as animal containment is a safety practice that is fundamental to animal sheltering.

Training and Exercises

Development of emergency animal mass care and sheltering capabilities requires planning, development of resources, team building, development of procedures and manuals, training, exercises, and corrective actions following exercises and incidents. Examples of planning materials, training presentations/videos, and forms are available in the appendices and references section of this document. Not every example of operating procedures will fit every jurisdictional or organizational need.

Many organizations operating emergency animal shelters may engage in day-to-day community animal sheltering and may need to utilize some of the same processes and forms used in their normal operations. Disaster protocols (such as hold times) may differ from daily routine and disaster animals should always be designated separately from normal animal intake/disposition.

The following suggested process should be considered:

- When building the initial capability, examine existing animal sheltering operational plans and procedures and adapt those as appropriate into the tactical plans and procedures of the lead jurisdictional organization for emergency animal mass care and sheltering.
- Develop and deliver training for staff and volunteers for the animal mass care and sheltering mission. In many cases, SLTT, regional, or national organizations may be able to provide expert training and planning assistance.

- Develop caches of equipment and supplies that will be needed for the animal mass care and sheltering mission. Use the cache(s) for training and exercises.
- Conduct exercises periodically to test plans, procedures, and reinforce training. Exercises should follow a “crawl, walk, run” progression that can start with discussion-based exercises or workshops that examine plans and procedures, and progress towards more complex exercises simulating a real incident. If the community has large exercises, try to ensure that the animal mass care missions are included in such exercises.

The FEMA Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides extensive information on this process. Training and exercises should be coordinated with local emergency management agencies. Exercises provide a safe environment for ensuring coordination between emergency animal mass care and sheltering, human mass care and sheltering, and the ICS and EOC processes for the jurisdiction.

After-Action Process Planning

Planning should include developing processes for after-action analysis of exercises and incident deployments. After-action processes are described in detail in the FEMA HSEEP materials and can be adapted to any scale of animal mass care and sheltering capability, from small local capabilities to Statewide or National NGO efforts. Critical elements of after-action processes include:

- Conduct a “hot-wash” discussion immediately after the exercise or at the end of an incident. In-person hot-washes are ideal, but virtual participation is also useful to pull in additional input. Hot wash discussions typically collect oral and/or written input and focus on three questions:
 - What went well, or what did we do right?
 - What did not go as well, or what problems did we encounter?
 - What could we do better next time?
- The After-Action Report development will take more time and collect more detailed information as compared to the hot wash discussion. One or more meetings should be scheduled and the team developing the report may need to have various conversations with individuals, agencies, or organizations.
- The After-Action Report should be a written document and should be shared with partners, lead agencies, and emergency managers to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Identify necessary corrective actions and continue to follow up on these corrective actions.



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Operational Missions: Non-Sheltering Animal Mass Care Missions

Mission 1: Sheltering-In-Place Support – Animal Feeding Support, Donations Management, and Supply Distribution

Definition: This mission area includes providing feed and critical supplies for the pets/animals of families sheltering in place, often through Points of Distribution (PODs), but occasionally through community-implemented door-to-door delivery systems (NMCS, 2015).

Other distribution methods include providing pet food and supplies to food banks, animal shelters/pet pantries, or other NGO-operated distribution methods. This mission area does not include the in-place feeding of pets or other animals that are located behind evacuation lines without families to care for them. Such services are addressed under the Best Practices Working Group for Animal Search and Rescue.

Implementation

This mission is primarily implemented by SLTT jurisdictional authorities in partnership with NGOs. Sources of pet/animal feed and supplies may include:

- *Donations Management:* SLTT jurisdictions or NGO partners (local or national) may acquire donations from manufacturers, distributors, or retailers of pet/animal feed or supplies. Supplies could include cat litter, puppy training pads (which may be important to people sheltering in place or staying with friends/family), leashes, collars, bowls, grooming tools, etc.
 - National NGOs, such as the members of the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC) and Greater Good, have dynamic national relationships with manufacturers and have been able to secure large amounts of animal feed and supplies during past incidents. Greater Good, as an example, also works to distribute non-disaster donations of pet food to food banks and animal shelters across the country with multiple pet food manufacturers providing the donated product.
 - Local animal shelters may operate pet pantries that provide donations to families in need throughout the year. Such relationships are readily amplified during disasters.
- *Donation Management Team Coordination:* As a best practice, during disaster response, donation requests by NGOs should be coordinated with the Donations Management Team at the jurisdictional EOC to ensure that requests are needed (e.g., ensure that the needed are not already on-hand within the incident) and not being requested in parallel/redundant efforts.

- Donation Management Teams may include emergency management staff, as well as NGO partners, and work to identify and coordinate donations across the incident. When developing a jurisdictional animal response plan, one or more facilities should be identified for receiving animal-related donations of food and supplies, which could be the same locations that are used to receive human-related food and supplies to eliminate redundancy in warehouse operations and distribution
- *Public Messaging Coordination:* Donations Management Teams and animal NGOs should work closely with Public Information Officers both to let the public know what is needed, as well as to communicate what is not needed. Such coordination might help identify an already available resource, rather than initiating a new request.
 - Excessive donations can result in spoilage or inappropriate use of donated products. Multiple requests from entities in the same jurisdiction can be confusing to corporate or other donors and cause delays or misdirection of donations. Nationally, donations should be coordinated among national animal-oriented NGOs, and their national mass care partners, affected SLTT jurisdictions, and FEMA.
- *Social Media and Donations:* Social media can be a powerful tool for distributing information and gathering resources in disasters. Large numbers of people can be reached almost instantly. Ensuring the official social media sites (such as a site sponsored by the lead local animal sheltering partner or local emergency management) carry carefully worded messaging is critical.
 - Monitoring social media sites for unofficial requests and making contacts with such requestors, can help identify what activities are safe and can be supported by local response and official resources. Discussion of social media platforms is also discussed in the Community Outreach and Engagement Best Practices document.
- *Points of Distribution:* Points of Distribution (PODs) are locations from which survivors can walk to or drive-through to pick up necessities, such as drinking water, shelf-stable foods, and other necessary household products to help them shelter-in-place in environments that may not include all utilities and disrupted community supply chains. Pet food and supplies have been offered at some PODs, but not all. Large bags of pet foods or cat litter may be difficult for PODs to manage.
 - Animal response planning partners should engage with jurisdictional authorities about the potential use of PODs to support families with pets. In some cases, such as in Texas, Cooperative Extension has set up PODs after hurricanes for distribution of animal feed and critical supplies (such



as fencing materials) with an agricultural focus. More information on PODs can be found at:

- FEMA Independent Study Course on PODs:
https://emilms.fema.gov/is_0026/curriculum/1.html
- FEMA Fact Sheet on PODs:
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_fact-sheet-distribution-management-plans.pdf
- FEMA Distribution Management Guide:
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_distribution-management-plan-guide-2.0.pdf

Donations Management Case Examples

After a hurricane, a Major-League Baseball club organized a collection drive at one of their games for pet food and supplies. The donation drive was successful in gathering a large amount of various food and supplies, and the club asked for the animal response partners to pick up the donations. Since the donations were unsorted, unpalletized, and difficult to transport, significant resources were immediately needed to sort, palletize, shrink-wrap, and distribute the products.

Since most emergency animal sheltering operations need consistent, high-quality pet food, most of the palletized assorted donated pet food was distributed to food banks and pet pantries to distribute to families in need. Better public messaging coordination with the Baseball team would have allowed more planning for what donations were most needed and provided time to prepare for managing the donated products.

Public messaging needs to be specific and tailored to the expected audience: In the response to a Colorado wildfire, a county fairground sheltered hundreds of evacuated horses. A media interview indicated the fairgrounds could use donated grass hay. Unfortunately, the mostly urban audience was unfamiliar with agricultural products and assumed that grass clippings would suffice, resulting in a line of cars dropping off bags of newly mown grass clippings, which were not usable.

As the COVID-19 virus began to spread in earnest across the US in March 2020, the unified County Animal Response Teams (CART) in Southeastern Pennsylvania recognized that pandemic impacts on food security could lead to significant animal abandonment. They also recognized that the human-animal bond had the power to potentially sustain people emotionally through the darkest days of the pandemic.

Working in close collaboration with both animal and human NGOs and the Bucks County Emergency Management Agency, the team set up a system to distribute tons of



pet food to families in need through food banks and drive-through PODs. The impact of this effort led to permanent changes in how the community addresses food insecurity, ensuring that pet owners would always have access to support.

- *Purchases:* If donations are inadequate to meet critical needs for families sheltering in place with pets, service, and assistance animals, then purchases may be appropriate through NGOs with donated funds, SLTT jurisdictions, or through requests for such purchasing support from the State, Tribal or Territorial Emergency Management Agency to FEMA (if appropriate disaster declarations apply).
- *Logistical Support:* In some incidents, donated products may need to be moved from the point of donation to the point of need. In some past incidents, such as with Hurricane Maria (2017 Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands), sea or air carriers were needed to move donations to those islands. Logistical support in moving donated products could be secured through:
 - Donated services by individual common freight carriers (some VOAD organizations may have such contacts), although this may be a very limited resource.
 - Transportation is funded by SLTT or NGO partners.
 - Transportation is funded by FEMA when an appropriate major disaster declaration and STT resource request is approved.

In 2017, multiple major hurricanes impacted the mainland US and both Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands. NGOs brokered massive amounts of donations of pet food and other critical animal supplies. Donors (manufacturers and NGOs) arranged for delivery of the required supplies to Jacksonville, FL, (location of a FEMA logistics center) where the loads were placed in shipping containers and shipped to the islands. More than a million pounds of pet food were shipped during the incident and distributed through Points of Distribution (PODs) and animal shelters.

Additionally, when it was discovered that horses housed at the racetrack in San Juan, PR were suffering due to a lack of feed and forage, private/NGO donations facilitated an air shipment of pelleted horse feed. This effort provided the horses with enough sustenance until sea transportation could deliver larger quantities of feed for the facility.

- *Packaging:* Points of Distribution may place restrictions on the weight of pet food packages that can be distributed. In Hurricane Sandy, state/local operated PODs restricted pet food packaging to 10# or less. Since most pet food was donated in larger packages, volunteers had to repackage and label large zip-close bags before distribution, which was highly labor intensive. Planning discussions with jurisdictional mass care coordinators and prospective donors could alleviate such challenges by obtaining donations in sizes that can be distributed without

repackaging. Similar challenges would be expected from cat litter, which often comes in large/heavy containers. Pet pantries (animal shelter programs for distribution of pet food and supplies to families in need) and food banks should be consulted as well, but often have somewhat more flexibility in packaging for products they can distribute.

- *Water:* When planning Points of Distribution, discussions should consider whether bulk or bottled water may be distributed for pets, service, and assistance animals. If families are sheltering in place with “backyard” livestock and loss of community water or power loss to wells, provisions may be needed for developing a water source and delivery options for such non-commercial livestock. Generally, such work would be anticipated to be organized and implemented by community livestock stakeholders at the neighborhood level in coordination with jurisdictional emergency management.
- *Home Delivery Options:* In some incidents, home delivery of food and supplies may be necessary for individuals/families with access and functional needs. Such impacted people/families may also have service, assistance, or pet animals which may also need food and supplies. Collaboration on delivery logistics between human and animal services is essential. In some cases, local public health policy may require human and pet food to be separated. During the Hurricane Sandy response, separation was accomplished by placing the pet food in the front of the vehicles with the drivers while the human food remained in the main cargo/loading area at the back of the vehicles.

Warning

Direct distribution of pet food and supplies to homes should be coordinated with jurisdictional emergency management for areas under “shelter-in-place” orders. Of great concern is the safety and security of home delivery personnel as well as ensuring local law enforcement are aware of their activities and that such teams carry appropriate credentials identifying them as part of the response.

- *Extended Mass Care Services for Families with Animals:* Pet or animal-specific supply distribution sites may provide an opportunity to establish assistance centers for additional services such as, but not limited to:
 - Veterinary wellness checks, first aid, microchip placement/registration, or other animal health needs
 - Dog washing and grooming stations for owners
 - Messaging about animal safety during response, recovery, reconstruction, or pertaining to environmental hazards such as debris, contaminated water, and ash

- Lost and found assistance, including arrangements for trapping frightened loose pets
 - Information on how to connect with dog walking or fostering for those with disaster-related mobility impairments
- *Emergency Feeding of Livestock:* In some instances, donated livestock feed or supplies may be available to non-commercial livestock owners impacted by disaster. Community equestrian organizations, agricultural associations, or Cooperative Extension may be able to help support such efforts.
- Typically, feeding of commercial livestock in disasters is the responsibility of the producer. In some cases, however, livestock feed availability and/or accessibility is restricted in such a manner as to threaten livestock herds with starvation. For example, in severe winter conditions, livestock without regular access to feed are vulnerable to exposure and death.
- Drought and disaster may disrupt the availability of livestock feeds, particularly hay. Livestock associations and the Extension Disaster Education Network (including SLTT/university Cooperative Extension personnel) have collaborated on identifying additional sources of hay and the resources available to transport such feed. Transportation logistics can be extremely challenging for such efforts since trucking costs for donations can rapidly exceed the value of the hay, making it less expensive to buy hay closer to the area of need than to transport donated products from much farther away.
- Emergency water caches using tankers, cisterns or refillable agricultural water bladders may be of value in supporting both commercial and backyard livestock.
- In severe winter storms, STT jurisdictions have used air assets (typically Air National Guard) to deliver hay to stranded livestock. While the extreme cost of such operations may exceed the value of the livestock, such operations have broader benefits:
 - Avoiding the widespread severe economic hardship to rural communities associated with mass livestock mortality.
 - Alleviating animal suffering
 - Avoiding the environmental damage and disposal costs associated with mass livestock mortality.

In the severe winter storms in SE Colorado in December of 2007, many livestock were stranded in 6 feet of severely drifted snow that limited accessibility to livestock herds. The Colorado Department of Agriculture initiated an Air National Guard air drop of hay to keep livestock alive until they could be reached by land.

In Hurricane Ike in 2008, cattle herds were mixed up, and cattle were scattered along Interstate 10 east of Houston, TX without access to feed or fresh water. Authorities had



to respond to multiple vehicle collisions involving cattle roaming the highway. The State of Texas provided feed and water at sites off the interstate, keeping the cattle alive until they could be safely relocated and returned to their owners and helping prevent additional car accidents and the potential environmental damage from mass cattle mortality incidents.

In many disasters, the distribution of food, water, and other supplies is critical to the health and well-being of survivors who are sheltering-in-place. Mass care planning efforts for such distribution systems should assess the potential to accommodate families with household pets, service, and assistance animals. Non-governmental partners and donor relationships are critical. In addition, SLTT mass care planners should develop and maintain active relationships with Cooperative Extension, which are based in State or Territorial Land-Grant Universities, to address critical issues regarding both backyard and commercial livestock.

Internet Resources

- FEMA IS-26: Guide to Points of Distribution: <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-26&lang=en>

Animal shelters sometimes operate “pet pantries” which provide donated pet food and supplies to families in need. Organizations that can help provide expertise on donation management include:

- National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition: <https://www.thenarsc.org/>
- Greater Good: www.greatergood.org
- Extension Disaster Education Network: <https://extensiondisaster.net/>

Mission 2: Non-Congregate Sheltering – Supporting Animal Issues

Non-congregate sheltering consists primarily of the use of private sector lodging, such as hotels, dormitories, rental cabins, lodges, or other single-family lodging, for the sheltering of people and, in some cases, their pets. In this section, “hotel” will be used to refer to any single-family lodging. When people obtain their own pet-friendly hotel lodging outside of emergency management facilitation, this is a private arrangement and not directly part of mass care and emergency services, per se.

Non-congregate sheltering can be used in all scale of incidents. For example, in a very small incident, it might be easier to place several families in hotel rooms rather than open a very small congregate shelter. In some cases, persons with functional or mobility challenges might be more comfortably housed in an accessible hotel room rather than in a congregate shelter environment. Jurisdictional emergency planners and their NGO partners need to identify providers of pet-friendly non-congregate sheltering and explore

both operational and financial aspects of such housing with the vendor before the incident.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency sheltering relied very heavily on non-congregate sheltering. People/families in hotel rooms presented fewer disease prevention challenges than would be present in congregate sheltering.

Service animals are allowed to accompany owners into non-congregate sheltering. In addition, some hotels have policies that allow assistance animals or family pets to stay as well. Some hotels require additional damage deposits when pets stay in their rooms and owners may be responsible for such deposits and any damages from pets, depending on hotel policies.

Not every pet is suitable for staying in non-congregate housing. Vocal dogs, destructive behavior, aggressive behavior, or large numbers of pets in a room might not be acceptable to hotel management. In addition, species beyond small pets, such as pot-bellied pigs or other “pet” livestock species, pet poultry, exotic pets, or venomous animals may be outside of hotel pet policies.

One option that is available if pets cannot be kept at enough hotels, would be to collocate pet sheltering in an easily accessible location convenient to several hotels. Owners could provide much of the care for their pets during the day while staying at hotels. In this situation, the pets are in congregate shelters (see below).

The pros and cons for non-congregate sheltering of people and pets are as follows:

Pros	Cons
Non-congregate housing allows people to care for their pets.	Not all hotels allow pets and pet-friendly hotel space may be limited.
Some hotels already allow pets and others may make exceptions for disaster survivors.	May be more costly, except for very small-scale situations (just a few families evacuated).
Generally, non-congregate sheltering is less stressful for both people and household pets, with greater flexibility for owners.	Household pets may create noise and damage or soil hotel rooms. Owners or emergency management may incur financial liability for damages, depending on the terms of a contract.

People who utilize service and assistance animals may be more comfortable in non-congregate housing.

Non-traditional “household pet” animals (small livestock, poultry, exotics) may not be acceptable to various hotels.

While not amenable to every situation, non-congregate family housing offers an opportunity to keep people and pets together during disasters.

Mission 3: Reunification of Household Pets and Other Animals With Owners

The purpose of this protocol is to outline processes for animal reunification during disaster operations. Reunification should be part of the planning process as the goal is to return pets to their family once it is feasible to do so. This guide outlines steps to take throughout the entire reunification process, starting with animal intake through demobilization.

Reunification has two major elements:

1. Discharging animals to families who checked those animals into the shelter
2. Helping owners locate, identify, and reclaim lost pets that may be in an animal control facility, veterinary or boarding facility, or emergency animal shelter

Effective reunification protocols start with gathering all relevant information at animal intake. In most disaster responses animals will be brought to shelter in one of the following ways.

- *Field Rescue*: If conducting field rescue, ensure the field team is completing proper forms and any documentation that is required.
- *Found Animals*: Citizens dropping off animals should complete a Found Animal Form
- *Owner Drop-Off*: All owners must complete a Shelter Intake Form
- *Drop-Off by a Partner Agency*: The person dropping off the animals must complete a Shelter Intake Form

Appropriate protocols must be in place from intake to discharge to ensure a “chain of custody” while the animal is in the jurisdiction’s care and to validate that the animal is returned to the appropriate owner. Animal control agencies and animal shelters within a jurisdiction have “return-to-owner” protocols that may be adapted for disaster response reunification. An additional aspect of disaster response is to ensure appropriate security in place at temporary animal shelter locations to prevent theft and preserve the “chain of custody.”



Community Outreach

After a mass care event, some people will inevitably be separated from their animals. It is imperative that the Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) manages the reunification efforts and utilizes the Public Information Officer (PIO) for messaging.

This messaging should include but may not be limited to:

- Social Media Pages
- Utilization of a dedicated phone number to manage lost/found animals
- Dedicated and well-known location to bring stray animals
- Dedicated location for people to view found reports or look for their lost animals

When considering messaging to reunite people with their pets it may be advantageous to consider methods to reach people in ways that seem unconventional. In addition to media and social media outreach, this may include:

- Signage/flyers at local hotels
- Signage/flyers at Points of Distribution (PODs)
- Signage/flyers at human shelters
- Outreach to hospitals if the incident resulted in injuries or illnesses

When communicating through various modalities it is a necessity to share the timeline required for picking up pets from these emergency shelters. While the AHJ may extend the hold time for stray animals beyond the normal scope, the usual limit is 15 to 30 days. Messaging on where to find a lost animal should be communicated regularly and in as many places as possible. These recommendations are not all-encompassing.

Reporting

Recovery efforts often concentrate on the rebuilding of the community and caring for the people of the community. Including animals in the reporting structure helps to ensure better recognition of the work done by Animal Control, NGOs, and community nonprofits. All reunifications should be included on daily situation reports and if possible, the methods utilized to bring those family members together.

Demobilization

As the community begins to stabilize and move toward recovery, human shelters, and temporary animal shelters will begin to demobilize. There will be animals that have not been returned to the owner. The causes for the lack of reunification may vary. During the planning phase of an operation, it is important to consider how stray/unclaimed animals will be managed once demobilization begins and ensure that ownership of those animals remains with the AHJ.



Once the hold time has been completed for the disaster animals in care, they may be eligible for adoption or transport to another agency if that is deemed appropriate in consultation with the lead jurisdictional agency. A final reporting of the number of disaster animals that were recovered during the response and were not returned to owners should be prepared as part of the incident summary report on animal rescue and sheltering. This ensures accuracy for the overall response and helps to prepare the jurisdiction for animal care needs in future incidents.

Mission 4: Transitional Housing

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to guide how to provide transitional housing to families with household pets once disaster shelters begin to close. While FEMA does not currently allow household pets to reside in transitional housing provided, there are alternatives that communities may consider to ensure that pets stay with their family and are not relinquished to animal shelters.

Definition

Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) is a FEMA program and must be requested by a state. It allows for temporary, short-term accommodations for eligible survivors when other housing options are not available after a presidentially declared disaster. SLTT jurisdictional authorities may directly work with NGO partners on transitional housing when the FEMA program is not in place.

Options

For families with pets, the options for transitional housing utilizing the FEMA program are limited. However, they do exist, and it often requires the AHJ to be creative in finding solutions.

1. *Hotels:* Individuals seeking transitional housing assistance can book their hotels utilizing <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/> to find available resources. Hotels may allow pets and it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that pets are allowed into those hotels.
2. *Animal Shelter Long-Term Housing:* As part of the planning process work with local animal protection organizations within your jurisdiction to determine how they may be able to aid families who have lost their homes and are unable to find housing that allows their pets to remain with them while they rebuild or repair their home. FEMA does not provide reimbursement for the care of animals in these transitional situations; however, it is important to report the number of animals that are being cared for during this time.
3. *Disaster Foster Programs:* The authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) may work with the animal protection organization that has jurisdiction over the animal response



during the time of crisis to develop a disaster foster program. This is a temporary foster program that allows pet owners to coordinate the care of their animals in a home setting for a specific amount of time with a foster family. The foster family is responsible for caring for the pet until the family can find permanent housing or the repairs on their existing home are finalized.

- a. The family is responsible for any pet supplies or medical care of the animal while in the foster program. It is important, however, to have an animal protection organization serve as the mediator for this foster program. This allows the agency to provide medical care or other services to the pet when the owner is unable to do so. Should the owner determine that they are unable to keep the pet as their own, the animal becomes the property of the animal care organization. The goal of this program is to keep pets out of the shelter in a less stressful environment with a family.
4. **Boarding:** The AHJ should consider as part of their planning process ascertaining information about potential boarding facilities that will offer low-cost or no-cost long-term boarding for families that have been impacted by a large-scale disaster.
5. **Non-Impacted Family Care:** Individuals impacted by a mass care event may have family or close friends outside of the impacted area. They may be able to provide support for a friend or family member's pets under certain circumstances and conditions. The AHJ should be prepared to provide the family with the necessary supplies to accommodate the housing of the pet. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Crate/Carrier
 - b. Fencing
 - c. Leash/Collar
 - d. Medical Care (routine vaccines, topical treatments)
 - e. Feeding Supplies

There may be a variety of creative solutions that have not been considered. AHJs are encouraged to plan for these transitional housing needs and take into consideration the importance of keeping the family together.

Congregate Emergency Animal Sheltering

Comparison of Congregate Companion Animal Sheltering Formats

There are three basic forms of emergency animal sheltering:

Type	Cohabitated	Collocated	Animal-Only
Key Features	People and animals are housed in the same space. Owners provide all animal care.	People and animals sheltered near each other, but in separate spaces. Owners provide most animal care.	Can be a fixed facility or temporary location. Staff and volunteers provide all animal care.
Pros	Surprisingly quiet. Low daily cost, low staffing levels. Less stressful for pets and people. Becoming more common.	Owners provide almost all animal care. Has been used at fairgrounds for horses and people. Reduces stress for people and animals. Traditional sheltering partners generally willing to support this type of sheltering. Can utilize spaces that cannot be used for human sheltering (e.g., a bus garage at a school)	Can make use of community animal shelters with all infrastructure already in place. Ideal for animals without known or available owners.
Cons	Need separate locations for people without pets. May need to relocate non-compliant people/pets. General mass care partners may not be willing to co-manage or support this form of sheltering. Requires more space than most types of sheltering.	May need to relocate non-compliant people/pets who fail to abide by rules of care and courtesy.	More stressful for owners and pets. Community pet sheltering capacity may already be stressed.
2009 Estimated Daily Cost Per Household Pet	\$1 per household pet; least amount of staffing needed	\$5 per household pet; mid-range staffing	\$25 per household pet; requires approximately 8+ times the level of staffing as cohabitated sheltering



The term “pet friendly” is in common use but is not well-defined. For purposes of this document, the term reflects allowing pets in non-congregate shelters (usually hotel rooms), cohabitated shelters, and colocated shelters.

It is not unusual to see some shelters where both household pets and livestock are sheltered at the same location. Fairgrounds represent an opportunity for such efforts.

Operational Planning

Any emergency response requiring human sheltering will result in corresponding needs pertaining to household pets, service, and assistance animals, and sometimes other animal types.

There is a Stafford Act/PETS Act requirement to accommodate people with household pets and services animals in emergency operations plans. Service animals, as discussed earlier in the document, should remain with their owner whenever possible. The status of emotional support animal category of assistance animals (as defined under the Fair Housing Act) has been considerably discussed in the last few years.

While there is currently not Federal requirement for emotional support animals to remain with their owners during emergency sheltering at this time, many local jurisdictions have provided accommodate to these owners and their animals, often using non-congregate sheltering (hotels) when available for both owners with service or assistance animals.

Each community will have different resources, and varying demographics (including animals) and may choose to plan for specific types of pet/animal sheltering. Some communities do not provide “pet-friendly” options, although providing pet-friendly options should be considered a best practice.

Planned animal sheltering operations may be insufficient in terms of space, equipment, or staffing. Planners should invest in identifying external partners or other options that can expand animal sheltering capacities when necessary.

Planning Checklist

- Engage with jurisdictional emergency management to coordinate congregate emergency animal sheltering with the overall jurisdictional Emergency Operations Plan.
- Identify the lead agency. Ideally, the agency has jurisdiction for household pets during non-disaster times. The lead operational organization (those who perform the sheltering) may be an NGO partner(s) working under the authority of the lead agency.

- Develop a care planning committee that includes:
 - Jurisdictional lead agency for animal sheltering, often animal control or jurisdictional animal shelter. If a Community Emergency Response Team (CART) or similar organization exists for the jurisdiction, they may be a critical or lead entity.
 - Emergency management
 - General mass care/sheltering organization (often the Red Cross)
 - Jurisdictional public health
 - Veterinary professional representative (such as local veterinarians, veterinary medical reserve program, or veterinary association)
 - Critical operational partners (non-governmental/contract animal shelter, volunteer animal welfare organization, etc.)
 - Facility owner/manager for critical/primary use sites
- Cooperative Extension in some rural communities may be an important partner or even a lead agency. Cooperative Extension may have oversight of the jurisdictional fairgrounds.
- Additional stakeholders that may need to be engaged later in the planning process include:
 - Volunteer organizations:
 - Animal rescue organizations
 - Disaster voluntary organizations that may support broader disaster services
 - Food banks
 - Volunteer centers
 - Citizen Corps programs (including Community Emergency Response Teams)
 - Animal-related service and retail businesses (grooming, boarding, training, feed stores, kennels, etc.)
 - Animal facilities, potentially including zoos (which may be able to provide expertise in managing exotic pets), canine racetracks (which may have potential backup locations), or others.
 - Other community resources including retailers (donations), warehouse owners (locations), and other interested parties.
 - Identify which type(s) of congregate sheltering are appropriate for the jurisdiction.
 - Identify current human sheltering locations:
 - Are some locations potentially amenable to cohabitated sheltering?
 - Are other/new locations useable?
 - What partners would be needed to co-manage both human and animal care issues?

- Identify possible colocated household pet shelter locations in the same campus or near current human shelter locations.
- Identify potential stand-alone household pet shelter locations, fixed and temporary.
- Assess each possible site, including:
 - *Utilities:* Evaluate heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), electrical, plumbing, drainage, etc.
 - *Layout/Construction:* storage, surface materials (can they be adequately cleaned and disinfected?), parking areas, entrance and egress, and other factors.
 - *Safety and Security:* Does the site offer protection against accidental animal escape? Are parking areas well-lit at night? Can access be limited to secured entry points? Is the building structure sufficient to withstand strong storms and outside flood plains?
- Develop a site plan for each primary or backup site that identifies the building layout; where different areas of the shelter are located; entrances and exits, roads, parking, storage, and other areas of the shelter site. It also identifies where fire extinguishers, utility shut-off valves, and other safety systems can be found.
- Secure agreements for the use of animal sheltering locations
 - Identify staffing resources including household pet shelter management, veterinary resources, animal control, volunteers, and security
 - Itemize the lists of equipment and supplies needed to set up and run a household pet shelter. For example, every pet needs a crate and food/water bowls. Cats require litter boxes as well. The appendices include sample lists. An acquisition budget/plan must be developed, and the cache storage protocol identified.
 - Establish critical SOPs for operations, such as mobilization, animal-human and animal-animal bite protocols, minimum requirements for care, management of stray animals presented at the shelter, demobilization, facility restoration, repair and replenishing the cache, and after-action procedures.
 - Prepare a training and exercise plan

Common Operational Elements

All types of sheltering have common operational elements, with some forms transitioning more of the animal care elements to owners. If permanent animal sheltering facilities are used, setup may be less complex.

A quick overview of these essential elements includes:

1. *Operational Planning*: Procedures development, site planning, equipment and supply acquisition, agreements, training, exercises:
2. *Notification*: Emergency animal shelter managers/teams are notified of a possible activation and pass the notification to staff and volunteers. This can also be considered a “stand-by” notification.
3. *Activation/Mobilization*: Emergency management requests that the emergency animal shelter facility be set up and staffed, usually with a target time and location. Shelter management gives instructions for moving equipment, caches, and personnel to the site and starts building staffing schedules. In forecast incidents, such as hurricanes or floods, emergency animal shelters may be mobilized before the anticipated need, but in areas not directly impacted or less impacted by the hazard.
 - a. Checking in of personnel should use an ICS form 211, including time, name, and position
 - b. Equipment and vehicles should also be checked in, including VINs when available.
 - c. All personnel should be checked out as they leave, most often at the end of each day/operational period/shift.
4. *Setup*: Act of setting up, including adding protections to walls, floors, or other parts of a temporarily used facility. Equipment and supplies must be moved in, signage posted, parking areas set up, barriers or barrier tape used to demark access points, etc.
5. *Security, Access Management, and Traffic Control*: Ensuring that people and animals are safe and that access to the emergency animal shelter is organized and controlled.
6. *Registration/Intake*: Capturing owner and animal data, veterinary medical history, creating a record, and communicating instructions/expectations to owners. In collocated or cohabitated shelters, the owner should be provided a written copy of the rules and owner responsibilities. Signed agreements are generally implemented between owners and the sheltering organization.
7. *Triage*: Initial health and behavioral screening of incoming animals. Health screenings may be conducted by veterinary technicians or experienced animal care staff and are not full veterinary examinations. Significant health issues should be referred to an onsite or off-site veterinarian. Behavioral screening looks for animal behavior that may include fear, aggression, escape behaviors, and any other indications that might show potential danger to other animals or people. Refer to the Disaster Veterinary Medical Response BPWG document.
8. *Preventive Veterinary Care*: In many sheltering operations, basic preventive care is provided, particularly if the owners do not know if such care is current or have



inadequate records of such care. Care may include vaccinations, internal parasite control, heartworm testing, and preventative, and external parasite control. Refer to the Disaster Veterinary Medical Response BPWG document.

9. *Veterinary Care:* Veterinary care may be provided for minor injuries or ailments. Major injuries or illnesses may need to be transferred to a veterinary facility. Refer to the Disaster Veterinary Medical Response BPWG document.
10. *Daily Care:* A daily care regimen should be in place, whether such care is provided by volunteers, staff, or owners. Daily care includes observation, feeding, exercise, and behavioral enrichment (play, attention, treats, etc.) Daily observations are generally recorded on a cage card for all but cohabitated sheltering.
11. *Discharge/Reunion:* Animals are discharged to the owner (or approved owner's agent), typically with a formal identification and discharge process. If animals are not reclaimed, they may transition to a community animal shelter.
12. *Demobilization and Restoration:* All animals are discharged or transferred. For temporary locations, all equipment and supplies are removed, and the facility is restored as per the use agreement. Some staff remain mobilized until all equipment is cleaned and disinfected, repaired, inventoried, and repacked in the cache. Supplies are inspected, restocked to previous cache inventory levels, and repacked into the cache.
13. *After-Action:* After-action processes were previously discussed and included a hot-wash meeting, after-action meeting, after-action report, and corrective action plan.

Overview of Emergency Animal Sheltering Command and Coordination

The emergency animal shelter manager has the overall responsibility for all aspects of the mission and must effectively delegate responsibilities to various management staff and supervisors. While ICS-type organizations can be used, it is critical to understand that the Emergency Animal Shelter Manager should not be referred to as an Incident Commander.

The shelter manager typically reports to a supervisor within the jurisdictional Incident Management Team (IMT), within the Operations Section. In some cases, animal sheltering operations may be classed as a supporting operation and controlled by the jurisdictional emergency operations center (EOC), rather than the IMT. The Shelter Manager is responsible for all elements of the mission that are not specifically delegated to another position/person.



Supervisory strategies should adhere to ICS principles of the span of control (each supervisor has three to seven people under them) and unity of command (each person knows who their supervisor is and can trace the line of command up to the shelter manager).

Resource requests can be made to active partners already engaged in jurisdictional emergency animal sheltering operations (e.g., mobilizing more volunteers from groups already supporting operations). If resources are mobilized directly from the lead and support organization already active in the emergency livestock shelter, then those resources must be checked in and reported through the ICS Operations Section, typically on form 204. Requests for resources can be made to the jurisdictional Incident Command or Emergency Operations Center, depending on where the shelter manager is reporting.

Social media requests for resources, donations, and volunteers should be coordinated first with the IMT and/or the EOC. Social media requests without this coordination can result in duplicate/confusing requests, requesting resources already available in the incident, unclear requests, and receiving items not needed. All in-kind donations should be tracked in detail to accurately reflect incident costs.

The emergency animal shelter should provide at least a daily report up the incident chain of command, including:

- Numbers and species of animals housed at the shelter along with the overall capacity of the shelter.
- For example: 123 pets, with a capacity of 200. The capacity number helps identify upcoming resource needs. Compare the previous report to a report of 187 pets with a capacity of 200 and it indicates that there is concern for needing additional mission capacity.
- Reports should also identify current or projected challenges, critical/unmet needs, information of significance to Public Information Officers, or other information of significance.
- Animals reunited with owners.
- Any other significant information, unmet needs, or challenges.

All media requests should be coordinated with the incident Public Information Officer (PIO), the PIO for the lead animal response agency for the incident, partner organizational PIO(s), and the Shelter Manager.

Onsite visits by media should not be allowed without coordination with PIOs. Staff and volunteers should be directed NOT to share pictures of animals or people in the shelter



directly to personal social media. Official photographs may need to obtain permission from those people in the pictures if they are going to be used by the organization or released to the media. Staff and volunteers should refer media to PIOs and not provide interviews with the media without PIO coordination.

Cohabitated Shelters: People and Animals Sharing the Same Location

From 2016 to 2018, the State of Louisiana engaged in a project to develop a toolkit for the implementation of cohabitated sheltering of people and pets. The project engaged local, State, and non-governmental partners and was funded, in part, by a cooperative agreement with USDA APHIS Animal Care. The final product was a comprehensive toolkit that can be considered a current best practice document.

Cohabitated sheltering of people and pets has been utilized sporadically for many years. One key challenge is that animal authorities and non-governmental partners are not prepared to provide management for human sheltering. Similarly, human mass care organizations have been reluctant to expand their mission and manage the pet portion of the endeavor. Cohabitated sheltering requires collaborative management expertise and resources for both people and pets.

This novel paradigm, though it works well where implemented, may take some additional time and incident experience to gain wider acceptance. A growing number of organizations are looking to support cohabitated sheltering. With additional experience, best practices could be updated in the future.

Some advantages of cohabitated sheltering include:

- Minimized additional stress for people and companion animals. While noise might be a presumed issue, most cohabitated sheltering efforts have reported the locations being noticeably calm and quiet. Minimizing additional stress during extremely stressful times can make the time more bearable for both people and animals.
- Lowest cost and staffing levels for all types of emergency animal sheltering. Owners are generally expected to bring crates/cages, bowls, blankets, and food for their pets and to provide 100% of pet care. Some staffing and volunteers may be needed to ensure that procedures are followed and provide any needed assistance. Generally, people without pets are sheltered at other locations.
- Cohabitated Human/Household Pet Sheltering Toolkit:
 - <http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Cohabitated-Human-Pet-Sheltering-Toolkit-v-19-07.23.2018.pdf>
 - <https://nationalmasscarestrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Cohabitated-Shelter-Guide-LA.pdf>

Some challenges to cohabitated sheltering:

- If people cannot comply with expected procedures (safety, noise, cleaning, animal restraint, etc.) then they may have to be asked to leave for other accommodations, such as a collocated shelter.
- Owners may not be as conscientious about disease prevention measures as would be more highly trained staff.
- Coordination with human sheltering management can be challenging
- Existing use agreements for facilities might not allow cohabitated sheltering

Collocated Emergency Animal Shelters

Collocated emergency animal shelters have seen much greater usage in the last 15-20 years. Allowing owners to care for their animals in a safe sheltering area near the human sheltering area reduces staffing and costs, reduces stress on survivors and their animals, and meets community expectations more fully.

A critical element of collocated sheltering operations is to enter a collaborative management relationship, engaging jurisdictional emergency management, the human mass care partner(s) (often the Red Cross), the lead animal agency, the animal sheltering organization(s), and the owners/managers of the facility(s) used. Careful pre-incident planning, agreements, training, and exercises will greatly enhance the success of collocated sheltering operations.

Several key differences in collocated animal sheltering that need emphasis are as follows:

- Joint registration areas for people and animals are ideal and should be staffed by both the lead organizations for people and animals. Intake should include the components listed in the overview sections 5, 6, and 7.
- Owners should be provided clear verbal and written shelter rules on their responsibilities for animal care while at the shelter. Additional copies of such information should be posted at prominent locations. Rules and/or instructions may include:
 - Schedules:
 - When owners need to feed their animals
 - Expected exercise requirements and times (species-dependent)
 - Hours pets are available (generally quiet hours are established in the animal location at night)
 - Records:
 - Owner “check-out” of animals from the shelter area, especially if they will be leaving the “campus” with the animals.
 - Care card notations of feeding, exercise, grooming, illness, etc.

- Behavior
 - Rules of animal restraint, where animals can be exercised, cautions about aggressive behaviors, excessive barking, etc.
 - Owners should be cautioned not to pet, handle, feed, or remove animals belonging to others unless they have explicit permission from that owner.
- Cleaning and infection control
 - Owners should be provided copies of cleaning, disinfection, and infection control measure procedures, which should also be posted.
- Cage/kennel cleaning
- Hand-washing instructions for owners
- Limit eating and drinking for people outside the animal housing area.
- Cleaning up urine or feces in exercise or other areas as appropriate
- Immediately reporting signs of illness, particularly respiratory signs (cough, sneeze, running nose, eye discharge) or gastrointestinal signs (vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite), any of which could be evidence of an infectious disease that could threaten other animals and people.
- Discharge procedures when leaving the shelter to go home or to other housing
- Instructions for owners pertaining to the management of the human sheltering portion of the facility.
- If owners do not abide by animal shelter rules, they may be asked to leave the shelter with their pets or have their pets transferred to an animal control facility for temporary housing.
- Owners are typically not allowed to leave the shelter for other housing and leave their animals at the collocated shelter. Some communities have adapted collocated models to accommodate people who are in the shelter, but also have jobs and need to leave for extended periods daily.

Animal-Only Emergency Shelters

Animal-only emergency sheltering continues to play an important role in disasters. In some cases of small emergencies, there may only be a very small number of animals that need sheltering. The use of a community animal control or sheltering facility in these cases may make a great deal of sense.

Sometimes, jurisdictional preference is to use fixed facilities for emergency sheltering and those decisions should be respected. Lastly, even if collocated or cohabitated shelters are available, owners must be in the associated shelter for their animals to stay there. Some owners could be hospitalized, able to stay somewhere but not be able to keep their pets there, or many other potential reasons.



In many disasters, an increased number of pets will be astray from fear, breakdown of fences, or other issues. Animals whose owner is not known are typically not placed at colocated shelters. It is not unusual in large incidents to see multiple companion animal shelters of various types used within a single jurisdiction or incident.

Operationally, when brick and mortar shelters provide sheltering for owned, rescued or stray pets/animals during disasters, operational procedures are derived from day-to-day procedures for that organization and will not be specifically addressed here separately. Information from general emergency pet sheltering best practices should be adapted to integrate with the facility's normal operating procedures.

When temporary facilities are used as animal-only emergency congregate animal shelters, additional procedures need to be in place, preferably developed, trained, and exercised by the shelter management team and volunteers well ahead of the disaster. In many respects, the tasks at a colocated emergency animal shelter are similar to an animal-only shelter, except that the owner is providing most of the care. Registration, record keeping, cleaning, disinfection, feeding, exercising, etc. have significant similarities.

Livestock Emergency Shelters

Definition: Emergency livestock sheltering consists of providing a safe and secure location with care for non-commercial livestock/poultry evacuated during disasters. Such shelters may be animal only, colocated near human shelters, or cohabitated, where people and animals are sheltered in immediate proximity.

Examples include:

- *Animal Only:* A barn at the fairgrounds is used for sheltering livestock evacuated in a disaster. The human shelter is 5 miles away at a school.
- *Colocated:* A fairgrounds barn is used to shelter livestock in a disaster and people are housed in a congregate shelter within the fairgrounds complex. Pets might also be housed in a suitable building within the complex.
- *Cohabitated:* A fairgrounds where people have their animals tied or penned adjacent to a camper or tent in which the family is staying. Some families might also be sleeping in the barn just outside the stall containing their animal(s). In some cases, pets might be kept at the same location as the family.

Planning assumptions:

- Jurisdictional authorities need to establish animal sheltering policies during the planning phase which determine which types of animals may be housed in jurisdictional animal shelters.

- Commercial livestock will not be housed in emergency animal shelters. Producers generally shelter in place or move their stock to a suitable alternate location.
- Horses, donkeys, and mules (of the genus *Equus*, termed equids, adjective equine) are typically the most common livestock needing emergency animal sheltering.
- Other livestock species regularly seen at emergency animal shelters include llamas, alpacas (camelids), goats, sheep, pot-bellied pigs, and occasionally larger “pet” pigs, rabbits, and occasionally other species.
- Small “backyard/non-commercial” avian flocks or exhibition (show) birds may be evacuated by their owners and need shelter. Backyard flocks present significant disease risk to other birds and people and should be housed, whenever possible, with separation between flocks/groups and always housed away from indoor pet birds.
- Dangerous livestock may not be suitable in emergency animal shelters unless secure housing and experienced handlers are available. Such animals include adult bulls, bison, adult boars, ratites (ostrich and emu), feral/wild/un-handleable equids, or other livestock deemed dangerous to staff, volunteers, or the public.

Operational planning:

For a full discussion of the community planning process pertaining to animal emergency management, refer to the Planning and Resource Management Best Practice document. Much of the background planning information for emergency pet sheltering may also have applicability to planning the livestock sheltering mission.

Community stakeholders that may be critical to planning and operating emergency livestock sheltering include, but are not limited to:

- Community/County Animal Response Teams (CART) if present – see Planning and Resource Management document
- Cooperative Extension
- Local fairground management/local public works
- Law enforcement and community animal control
- SLTT animal health and agricultural officials
 - Livestock brand inspectors in some states
- SLTT or local public health and environmental health
- Local and SLTT emergency management agencies
- Veterinary practitioners and associations including veterinary medical reserve programs
- Veterinary medical or technology academic institutions
- Livestock producer organizations of livestock/poultry/breeder associations

- Equestrian organizations and private equestrian facilities
- Stockyards, auctions, racetracks, or rodeo facilities
- Animal welfare organizations, such as animal shelters, equine rescue groups, etc.
- Agricultural support industry (e.g., feed store, co-op, ranch supply)

Emergency livestock sheltering plans should identify (summary list only):

- Lead agency/authority for operating the emergency livestock shelter
- Agreements supporting the emergency livestock shelter mission
- Supporting agencies/organizations that provide expertise and resources
- The lead onsite agency or organization
- Projected integration into the overall Incident Command System (Refer to the *NASAAEP 2023 Current Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management Incident Command and Coordination* document for additional information).
- Sources of veterinary medical support
- Sources for emergency livestock shelter team members (staff or volunteers)
- How will the emergency livestock shelter be operated?
- As animal only, collocated, or cohabitated formats?
- With or near emergency pet shelters?
- What species of animals will be accommodated?
- Sources of equipment and supplies
- Sources of funding and cost management
- The facility used, and potential alternate locations, including agreements
- What training and exercises will be needed to initiate a functional capability?
- What ongoing training and exercises will be needed to maintain the capability?
- Activation and demobilization information

Written operational plans/standard operating procedures (SOPs) are critical to mission success, particularly when combined with training and exercises. Initial SOPs will likely need to be re-evaluated through exercises and may need to be adapted to real incident circumstances.

Key tasks and sub-tasks for emergency livestock sheltering, including operational practices:

- Notification/activation/mobilization
- Setup/organization
 - A pre-use walkthrough of the facility to be used should document any existing damage or issues of concern.



Site emergency plans should be located and applied to emergency animal sheltering uses. All fire codes should be followed, and fire extinguishing assets located.

Facility owners/operators need to communicate any restrictions or concerns to the Emergency Livestock Sheltering Team. Restrictions might include:

- Time limits (for example scheduled events expected at a fairgrounds)
- Access restrictions or safety concerns (e.g., ongoing areas of construction)

The Emergency Livestock Sheltering Team need to set up according to their SOPs, included, but not limited to:

- Identifying a management/records area with all needed office and computer/printing resources
- Perform check-in for all team members and equipment
- Setting up utility and internet technology access
- Placing signage directing incoming vehicles and foot traffic to the appropriate location. If colocated or cohabitated sheltering, post instructions on owner responsibilities and daily schedules at multiple locations
- Moving in necessary equipment and supplies
- Securing feed and bedding supplies
- Designating a staff/volunteer break area where eating would be allowed (eating should not be allowed in animal areas)
- Assess weather forecasts along with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning infrastructure, functionality and needs
- Coordinate with State Animal Health Officials (State Veterinarian) to determine if there are any disease hazards of significance in the area that are of significance to operating the emergency livestock shelter and what mitigations would be necessary.
- Install cleaning and biosecurity resources (cleaning equipment and supplies, foot baths, hand-washing stations, isolation/separation areas as appropriate.
- Creating an organizational chart, specifically assigning management staff, supervisors, and team assignments
- Conduct site-specific hazard assessment, create safety messages, identify safety procedures and personal protective equipment needs.
- Assess security needs and coordinate with ICS Operations Section if specific security resources are needed.
- Conduct just-in-time training as needed
- Set-up is often complicated and functional drills/exercises are critical to rapid and effective setup of an emergency livestock shelter.

Intake

- Registration:
 - Create animal records, including owner information, emergency contacts, animal information, vaccination history, special needs (e.g., medication, handling/care, cautions, feeding), and take photographs. Provide owners with a copy of the intake form as a receipt. Coordinate with the State Brand Inspection agency (if one exists) concerning animal identification requirements for intake and release.
 - Provide owners with instructions/detailed expectations consistent for the type of emergency sheltering (animal only, collocated, cohabitated)
 - Use signage extensively to help direct and advise owners
- Veterinary and behavioral triage
 - All animals should receive brief triage for animal health and behavior
 - Intake triage is critical in preventing disease outbreaks in an emergency livestock shelter
 - Animal triage is not a full veterinary physical examination. An experienced animal handler or veterinary technician can perform intake triage. If significant health issues are noted, a veterinary examination may be appropriate. Additional information on animal health triage is provided in the Disaster Veterinary Medicine Current Best Practices document.
 - Behavioral triage should be conducted by an experienced handler with species-specific experience. Observations should be noted in the animal record and could include:
 - Behavioral observations (fear, reactivity, low training level, aggression, or medically dependent challenges such as blindness, deafness, etc.)
 - Suggested mitigations and safety/cautionary information

If the area is subject to a response or high risk for a specific high-consequence animal disease (examples: avian influenza, equine herpesvirus, vesicular stomatitis virus, foot and mouth disease) then triage of susceptible species should occur outside the facility/at the gate. Potentially, SLTT or federal veterinarians could be asked to assist in such triage and divert suspect cases to a different location.

The detection of certain high-consequence diseases within an emergency livestock shelter could have very serious consequences, including quarantine of the facility and susceptible animals, additional testing, and even euthanasia of exposed animals in some cases. Such situations could result in prolonged quarantine of a facility (such as a fairgrounds) would cause cancellation of events and significant economic impacts. Extreme caution is warranted in times of elevated livestock disease risk.

Animal Identification/Brand Inspection

All animals coming into an emergency animal shelter should be identified when at all possible. Identification could include:

- Freeze or thermal brands, lip tattoos, microchips, ear tags, bird leg bands, halters with animal information, neck chains/bands, non-toxic paint markings, auction (back) tags, or any species appropriate ID
- Photographs will help in tracking animal identification
- Animal ID may be more difficult for small, caged animals (rabbits, poultry), but cage cards with descriptions should identify enclosed animals.

Stray Livestock

If stray livestock are presented, jurisdictional authorities (Brand Inspection, Animal Control, etc.) should be notified. After triage, animals should be housed in a separate area from owned animals (if possible).

Veterinary Medical Care and Biosecurity

Please refer to the Veterinary Disaster Medical Response document for detailed information on veterinary medical care, biosecurity, and zoonoses prevention. Some basic points of emphasis are provided here:

- Veterinary support for daily care should include a daily walkthrough and brief visualization of all animals. Further examination may be warranted for animals showing signs of concern with ongoing health issues. In some cases, veterinarians/veterinary technicians may be integrated full-time into the sheltering team and in other cases, may provide once-daily visits along with emergency support.
- Veterinary personnel should have species-specific expertise
- Discussions should occur in planning pertaining to the availability and cost of veterinary medical support, answering some key questions:
 - Will veterinarians donate their time to support intake triage and daily walkthroughs?
 - If treatments are needed, how will owner consent be facilitated and how will owners be billed for the cost of treatments?
 - How will medications (coming in with animals or provided by an onsite veterinarian) be secured and managed? The owner's keeping and administering medications is optimal.
 - How will the team manage animals breaking with signs of illness (cough, eye/nasal discharge, diarrhea, fever, etc.)? Is an isolation area identified?



Biosecurity is the process of preventing disease entry into a facility and preventing the spread of the disease within or spread out from the facility. Biosecurity applies to animal-to-animal spread as well as animal-to-human (zoonotic).

Veterinary and public health partners should be engaged in biosecurity planning. Written biosecurity plans are encouraged. Biosecurity briefings should be provided along with safety briefings daily for staff and volunteers.

Hand-washing stations should be readily available and staff, volunteers and the public should be encouraged to wash hands frequently. Visitors should be strongly discouraged if they don't have a specific purpose for being at the emergency livestock shelter. Handwashing between each cage/pen or stall is recommended. Owners should handle their animals only unless requested to help by another owner.

A written cleaning and disinfection protocol should be provided to owners, staff, and volunteers and key steps posted throughout the facility. Stalls, pens, or cages should be cleaned regularly. Animal feces and soiled bedding should be removed frequently and disposed of away from the facility

Develop an insect and rodent control program as appropriate for the season and environment. Protect stored feed from rodents. If using rodenticide baits, ensure that the baits are not accessible by dogs that might be brought in with owners.

Do not share food pans, water containers, and other materials between animals without intervening cleaning and disinfection. Staff and volunteers should stay home if they are ill. Masking may be appropriate in times of heightened respiratory illness threat.

Owners who are ill should find alternate caregivers if possible or utilize masks and gloves to enter the facility. Eating should be strongly discouraged in animal areas. Clean break areas near a hand-washing station should be used for meals and snacks

Security

A security assessment should be performed pre-incident if possible or at setup. Additional lighting might be needed in parking areas or other areas where staff, volunteers, or owners need to access after dark.

Perimeter fencing (if present) should be inspected, and unwanted gaps repaired. Some jurisdictions will provide resources for criminal background checks for pre-screening staff and volunteers. Unaffiliated volunteers should be screened to the degree possible.



Jurisdictional volunteer centers can be strong partners in the volunteer screening process.

Owners, staff, or volunteers exhibiting behaviors of concern, including anger/rage, threats, intoxication, sexual harassment, bigotry, or other alarming behavior should be cautioned or, if needed, banned from the facility.

In some circumstances contract security or law enforcement may be needed onsite for security. The Emergency Livestock Sheltering Team should ensure that all staff and volunteers have emergency numbers for fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical services, if not using 911 only.

Animal Safety and Security

No animals should be removed from the emergency livestock shelter campus except for the formal discharge process. Exercising resident animals should occur within the boundaries of the facility. Facilities with perimeter fencing are preferred. Ideally, a single gate is used for entry/exit and a person is posted at the gate to control entry and double-check for discharge papers on exit.

STT Brand Inspection agencies may ask for additional steps in ensuring safe animal discharge or may help staff sheltering locations. Animals should only be released to owners or validated owner agents.

Animal escape is a serious concern and could result in death or injury to both people and animals. Emergency livestock shelters should be set up to minimize escape. Should an animal escape happen, immediate closure of exits to buildings or properties (if fenced) will facilitate the rapid and safe recovery of animals.

When owners or others engage in poor or dangerous animal handling or care practices (for example, wrapping a lead rope around their hand or jerking a frightened horse's lead rope excessively), non-confrontational instruction should be provided by staff or volunteers. Incidents of animal abuse (using standards set by local jurisdictional or STT statutes) should be reported to the appropriate enforcement authority promptly.

Discharge/Disposition

Discharge should be a formal, documented process including the following steps:

- Validate that the person picking up the animal is the owner or a formal agent of the owner. Identification should be visualized to confirm identities if not already well known.

- Inspect the trailer/vehicle being used to pick up the animals for safety concerns (such as rotting floors, sharp edges, adequate vehicle, secure frame hitch, etc.)
- If an outstanding veterinary fee exists, ensure appropriate owner contact information is on file to pass onto the veterinarian. Provide veterinary instructions and medications to the owner as appropriate.
- Provide a discharge form that provides any necessary information for the owner, and which the owner signs acknowledging receiving the animal(s). The sheltering team should keep one copy and provide another to the owner/agent. Comply with any additional instruction from the STT Brand Inspection agency (if applicable).

Loading Livestock for Exit

Loading livestock into trailers can be routine or pose significant hazards to people and animals. If owners feel capable of loading their animals, allow owners to perform loading whenever possible. Some species may need access to a loading chute or alleyway into which a trailer can be tightly backed up. If loading presents challenges, only experienced personnel from the livestock sheltering team should attempt loading.

Details of safe livestock loading are beyond this document, but considerations include:

- Ensure only as many people as necessary are around the animals
- Go slow and try to keep the level of fear and agitation of the animals minimized
- Do not attempt to physically force large animals into the trailer
- Small, 2-horse trailers may present problems for untrained or agitated horses. Arranging for a larger trailer for transportation may reduce the risk
- Call for veterinary assistance if necessary
- If animals are not halter broken, use panels or alleyways to create a path directly into the trailer.

In some incidents, animal evacuation and transportation teams may have brought animals to the emergency livestock shelter for households that do not have the capacity for transportation back home. The emergency livestock sheltering team should coordinate with the animal response operations leadership to determine if assistance will be available for helping people return sheltered livestock home or to an alternate location.



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Challenges and Possible Courses of Action

While specific jurisdictions may experience various challenges, some challenges have remained consistent in emergency animal mass care and sheltering missions during disasters.

Management of SARS-CoV-2 Risks in Emergency Animal Mass Care and Sheltering

In or before December 2019, SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in people, emerged and continued to spread, creating a pandemic. SARS-CoV-2 also infects a wide range of animal species, including dogs, cats, and many other animals. The main hazard during the COVID-19 pandemic was the spread of disease from person to person. There was cause for concern, however, on how to manage both human and animal risk during this period.

The primary focus of emergency mass care services was to limit spread among people. This was accomplished through social distancing, identifying people who might be infected, use of masks and hand hygiene, and transitioning to non-congregate sheltering (primarily hotel rooms) for people, including those with pets, rather than congregate sheltering.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published recommendations for emergency animal sheltering that provide additional infection control through (summarizing):

- Identifying animals belonging to people who are actively infected and housing those animals in a separate area.
- Isolating any animals showing signs that might be consistent with SARS-CoV-2, such as sneezing, coughing, fever, lethargy, and loss of appetite.
- Ensuring animal care staff utilized effective infection control measures, including appropriate personal protective equipment (including cloth face masks or N-95 respirators) and thorough cleaning and sanitation measures.

The National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and other sources released additional materials pertaining to the management of animals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional challenge was finding adequate numbers of trained animal sheltering staff or volunteers who were able/willing to deploy. This type of challenge may present itself during other incidents where chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological hazards are present.

Self-Deploying Organizations or Individuals

In some incidents, organizations and individuals have self-deployed without just-in-time or prior engagement with emergency management authorities or the jurisdictional lead agency for animals. In the worst-case scenarios, individuals or rogue groups have removed animals from the jurisdiction without approval, seriously decreasing the ability to arrange a reunion of owners and animals. In other cases, “pop-up” animal shelters have been conducted at locations or using procedures that are unsafe for both people and animals.

Mitigation of this challenge is through developing adequate jurisdictional capabilities for emergency animal mass care and sheltering. When additional resources are needed, jurisdictions can manage this effectively by having well-designed agreements with additional jurisdictions and organizations, utilizing the previously discussed resource management systems, and (if desired) developing just-in-time systems for accepting, screening, and training new volunteers (see below).

Some groups or individuals that are not needed may become frustrated and angry, sometimes utilizing social media as a highly critical platform for negative information about the response. Having effective and transparent public messaging about the state of the animal response is essential in such cases.

Management of Spontaneous Volunteers

While volunteers are critical for everyday and emergency sheltering of animals, volunteers need screening and training to be used safely and effectively. Emergent or spontaneous volunteers can be managed by:

- Filtering emergent volunteers through a community volunteer center
- Capturing interest and diverting emergent volunteers into screening and training programs for use in future incidents
- Identifying roles where volunteers with limited training can be used safely and effectively in the current incident and then transition into volunteer development programs

Catastrophic Incident Considerations

Catastrophic incidents/circumstances could include any very large-scale incident, multiple incidents in various parts of the nation, or a series of large-scale incidents that deplete available resources. Examples of catastrophic incidents include:

- Large-scale geological incidents may involve earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis.
- Catastrophic hurricanes
- Nuclear attacks or large-scale radiological incidents

- Multiple large-scale incidents over many states at one time, such as multiple hurricanes, floods, or wildfires

Catastrophic incidents can increase the demands for many aspects of emergency management and require dynamic resource support processes ranging across all levels of governmental and non-governmental sectors. Aggressive resource mobilization will require dedicated representation of animal issues at each of the local EOCs, State Tribal or Territorial EOCs, and at FEMA coordination centers, including the National Response Coordination Center. Understanding the NIMS resource management processes is critical in catastrophic incidents.

In some large-scale incidents, additional local or emergent volunteers, including survivors in the mass care system, could be recruited for just-in-time training. In the largest scenarios, off-site just-in-time training for animal emergency mass care and sheltering volunteers may be needed to meet demands over an extended period.

Interorganizational Conflict

Unfortunately, inter-organizational conflict can complicate the delivery of emergency animal mass care and sheltering services. Examples could include:

- Animal organizations with non-disaster agendas or other priorities may engage in conflict with other response organizations, including social media attacks targeting other response partners or jurisdictional authorities. This can be particularly severe for groups that may not be needed in the response and were turned away.
- Conflict over assigned missions or asking response partners to perform missions outside their perceived scope of capabilities. Example: Veterinary medical teams may be unwilling to perform overall management of emergency animal sheltering operations rather than focusing on veterinary medical response missions.

Mitigation

- Having strong pre-incident jurisdictional MOUs with external response organizations that could include and expected standard of conduct
- Developing an adequate jurisdictional capability that minimizes reliance on external resources for limited-scale incidents
- Engaging in emergency exercises that allow response partners to work together in “no-fault” scenarios where potential conflicts can be defused in a low-stress situation.



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Challenges in Animal Mass Care and Sheltering

1. Socialization of the mass care arena to cohabitated animal sheltering: While cohabitated sheltering is becoming more common, the use of this format has tremendous potential for addressing the needs of people with pets, service, and other animals. Some discussions are happening on this issue at the time this document was created.
2. Providing better ongoing support for people with pets and other animals after leaving congregate sheltering operations. Not all transitional or temporary disaster housing allows pets. For many recovering survivors, the use of private boarding facilities at their own expense may be prohibitive. While some barriers to pet-friendly transitional housing may have caused (such as landlord reluctance), some are residual policy barriers that could be addressed without undue negative impacts.
3. The emergence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in people, created additional awareness of the importance of biosecurity/disease prevention within the spectrum of both human and animal emergency mass care and sheltering. Additional training and refinement of biosecurity procedures for emergency animal sheltering teams will be needed, particularly in the face of the current risks and future emergent zoonotic disease threats.
4. Just-in-time training (JIT) programs for catastrophic disasters
 - a. While training programs for emergency animal mass care and sheltering are certainly available, a true program for large-scale JIT training requires more than a curriculum. A national plan for such JIT surge training programs, including emergency animal sheltering, will need the following:
 - i. A pre-identified curriculum
 - ii. Pre-identified and qualified instructors
 - iii. The logistical framework for a recruitment process includes capturing information, evaluating, and screening personnel, and directing them into the training program when appropriate.
 - iv. A virtual, in-person, or combined training delivery system
 - v. A shadowing system to allow newly trained personnel to deploy in a shadowing role for at least a day or two before assuming full duties
 - vi. A mechanism to address volunteer liability and injury issues
 - vii. Qualifying the trainees to use appropriate personal protective equipment, including, when necessary, filter respirator (N-95) use.
 - b. To have a truly national system of JIT training for catastrophic incidents, Federal agencies, national NGOs, and state representatives would need to collaborate in an effort that will provide the expertise and resources to make such programs workable.



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Appendix A: Acronyms, Key Terms, and Definitions

Acronyms

An asterisk indicates the term has a more complete definition in the following section.

AAR	After Action Report
ACO	Animal Control Officer
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act (defines service animals)
AHJ	Authority Having Jurisdiction
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA)
ASAR	Animal Search and Rescue
CART	County/Community Animal Response Team*
CBRN or CBRNE	Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (explosive)
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team (Citizen Corps program)
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOI	Department of Interior
EIEIO	The chorus from “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact*
EOC	Emergency Operation Center* (also termed Coordination Center)
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan (may be preceded by jurisdictional identifier)
ESF	Emergency Support Function*
ESF6	Emergency Support Function 6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services)
ESF8	Emergency Support Function 8 (Public Health and Medical Services)
ESF9	Emergency Support Function 9 (Search and Rescue, SAR)
ESF11	Emergency Support Function 11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
HHS or DHHS	Health and Human Services (U.S. Department of)
HVAC	Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning
IA	Individual Assistance (FEMA)
IAP	Incident Action Plan*
IC	Incident Commander
ICC	Incident Command and Coordination

ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System*
IMT	Incident Management Team*
IMAT	Incident Management Assistance Team (FEMA)
IOF	Interim Operating Facility (precursor to Joint Field Office)
IT	Information Technology
JFO	Joint Field Office (FEMA)
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System (multiple locations)
MA	Mission Assignment*
MAA	Mutual Aid Agreement
MAC Group	Multi-agency coordination group (policy level)
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps (a program within Citizen Corps)
NARSC	National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition
NASAAEP	National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs
NDMS	National Disaster Medical System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRCC	National Response Coordination Center
NRF	National Response Framework
NSS	National Shelter System
NVRT	National Veterinary Response Team
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PA	Public Assistance (FEMA)
PAPPG	Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (FEMA)
PETS Act	Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (amendment to the Robert T. Stafford Act of 1974)
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of contact
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RRCC	Regional Response Coordination Center (FEMA)
RRF	Resource Request Form (FEMA)
RSF	Recovery Support Function
SAHO	State Animal Health Official
SAR	Search and Rescue
SART	State Animal/Agricultural Response Team*

SME	Subject matter expert
SOG	Standard Operating Guidelines
SOP	Standard Operation Procedures
STT	State, Tribal and Territorial
STTI	State, Tribal, Territorial and Insular
STTL	State, Tribal, Territorial and Local
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
USAR or US&R	Urban Search and Rescue
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VOAD AND NVOAD	(National) Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
VERT, VRC or VMRC	Veterinary Emergency Response Team, Veterinary (Medical) Reserve Corps
Web EOC	Software platform for EOC management (used by FEMA and many other jurisdictions)
ZAHP	Zoo and Aquarium All Hazards Partnership

Key Terms and Definitions

Legal definitions of different types of animals vary across jurisdictions. To provide consistency across the Animal Emergency Management Best Practice Working Group documents, animal classifications and definitions are provided as common-use definitions.

For a specific legal definition, refer to jurisdictional definitions. These definitions are generally accepted in the US and are sourced from global, state, and/or federal guidelines. Other key terms are used in animal emergency practices. This list addresses some common terms used during emergency response.

• Animal Definitions

- **Animals:** Animals include household pets, service and assistance animals, working dogs, livestock, wildlife, exotic animals, zoo animals, research animals, and animals housed in shelters, rescue organizations, breeding facilities, and sanctuaries (source: [National Preparedness Goal](#)).
- **Assistance animals:** an assistance animal is not a pet. It is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability (source: [Section 504 of the Fair Housing Act](#)).
 - Note – service animal definitions under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and assistance animal definitions under the Fair Housing

Act only differ by the exclusion of emotional support from the service animal definition.

- **Livestock:** The term livestock may have a specific definition within individual states and Federal programs. In the broadest use, including general ESF #11 use, livestock includes domestic livestock typically kept on farms and such as cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, and other animals raised for food or fiber, as well as horses, donkeys, and mules. “Alternative livestock” may include wild cervids (elk, deer, etc.) as well as bison, ostrich, emu, or other wild species kept for food production. When discussing “livestock,” it is essential for all parties to work from the same definition.
- **Non-commercial livestock or “backyard” livestock:** This is another flexible term that may have a specific definition in local, State, Tribal, Territorial and/or Insular (STTI) emergency plans. In its broadest use, non-commercial livestock would include animals kept at residences for pleasure, companionship, sport (not commercial racing) or household food production which does not generate food or products intended to enter commerce.
- **Pets/Household pets:** Summarizing from the FEMA Public Assistance Policies, household pets are domesticated animals that:
 - Are traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than commercial purposes
 - Can travel in common carriers
 - Can be housed in temporary facilities
 - Examples are dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, rodents, hedgehogs, and turtles
 - FEMA Public Assistance excludes these species as household pets: farm animals (including horses), racing animals, reptiles (other than turtles), amphibians, fish, insects, and arachnids
 - *Note: This definition applies to expense eligibility under the FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program and in no way limits STTI, Local, and non-governmental entities from defining and managing all animal types per their own policies.*
- **Service animals:** Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department's ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2020).

- **Working animals:** The term working animal can vary considerably within the situational context, but within an emergency management context, ESF #11 considers this group to include animals (typically dogs and horses) working in law enforcement (detection, patrol, apprehension, etc.) and animals working in search and rescue (primarily dogs used in search and recovery missions). Working dogs may include dogs used in hunting, guarding and for agriculture tasks.
- **Animal Emergency Management Annex:** A component of a jurisdictional emergency operations plan that provides information on how animals will be managed in disasters, including organizational responsibilities.
- **Biosecurity:** Measures that prevent the spread of disease to, from, or within a premises containing animals.
- **Community or County Animal Response Team (CART):** An organization developed to implement the animal elements of the jurisdictional emergency operations plan. The exact title and format vary considerably (a team of organizations, direct volunteers, etc.) The critical element is that the CART must be under the control of, or have an agreement with, the local government.
- **Coordination Center:** *FEMA EMI ICS Glossary* – A facility that is used for the coordination or agency or jurisdictional resources in support for one or more incidents.
- **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC):** EMAC is a national interstate mutual aid agreement that enables states to share resources during times of disaster. The thirteen (13) articles of the Compact sets the foundation for sharing resources from state to state that have been adopted by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and has been ratified by Congress (PL-104-321).
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** See Coordination Center definition above.
- **Emergency Support Function (ESF) (Federal):** Some states, but not all, use ESF terminology. Some states use more than 15 ESFs and do not necessarily align with Federal ESFs.
- **Disaster Declaration:** A Disaster Declaration is a formal statement by a jurisdiction that a disaster or emergency exceeds the response and/or recovery capabilities.
- **Disaster/emergency:** An occurrence of a natural catastrophe, technological accident, or human-caused event that has resulted in severe property damage, deaths, and/or multiple injuries. Except for use in certain declarations, the terms are commonly used interchangeably.
- **Emergency manager:** The jurisdictionally appointed position that conducts analysis, planning, decision-making, and assignment of available resources to prevent/mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of all hazards.

- **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP):** A document maintained by various jurisdictional levels describing the plan for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards.
- **Incident Action Plan (IAP):** *From the FEMA ICS Glossary* – An oral or written plan containing incident objectives which reflect the overall strategy for managing the incident. It may include the identification of operational resources and assignments. It may also include attachments that provide direction and important information for management of the incident during one or more operational periods.
- **Incident Command System (ICS):** *From the FEMA ICS Glossary* – A standardized on-scene emergency management construct specifically designed to provide for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. ICS is used by various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, to organize field-level incident management operations.
- **ICS forms:** Nationally standardized forms used to manage or document incident response under the Incident Command System. Forms can be found on FEMA's website.
- **Incident Management Team (IMT):** The Incident Commander and appropriate Command and General Staff personnel assigned to an incident. Key IMT positions include (source: FEMA ICS Glossary):
 - **Incident Commander (IC)** – assigned by jurisdictional authorities to oversee all aspects of the incident response
 - **Command Staff:** Safety Officer (SOFR), Liaison Officer (LOFR), Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - **General Staff:** Operations Section Chief (OSC), Planning Section Chief (PSC), Logistics Section Chief (LSC) and Finance and Administration Section Chief (FASC)
- **Isolation:** Segregation of animals to prevent disease exposure or spread.
- **Mission Assignment (MA):** A work order issued by FEMA to another Federal agency directing the completion of a specific task, and citing funding, other managerial controls, and guidance. There are two general types of MAs:
 - **Federal Operations Support (FOS)**—Requested by a Federal agency to support Federal operations.
 - **Direct Federal Assistance (DFA)**—Resources requested by and provided to affected State and local jurisdictions when they lack the resources to provide specific types of disaster assistance.

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- **Mutual aid:** emergency assistance provided from one jurisdiction or organization to a peer (local-local, state-state, NGO-NGO, etc.).
 - **Quarantine:** Isolation of animals that may have an infectious disease for a specified period to allow for testing or extended observation.
 - **Resource typing and credentialing:** Resource typing is defining and categorizing, by capability, the resources requested, deployed, and used in incidents. Resource typing definitions establish a common language and defines a resource's (for equipment, teams, and units) minimum capabilities.
 - **State Animal/Agricultural Response Team (SART):** SART organizations vary considerably in their structure, mission, and nomenclature (many don't use the SART name). In general, SART-type organizations provide a framework for State stakeholders to support the State animal emergency management plan. SART-type organizations generally are under the control of the state or have an agreement with the state.
 - **State veterinarian/animal health officials (SAHO):** The veterinary officer/official for a particular State or territory of the U.S. in charge of animal health activities (exact title varies).
 - **Zoonoses:** Disease that can be transmitted between animals and humans.



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Appendix B: Estimating Community Animal Populations

Population of various animal categories (pets, service animals, assistance animals, livestock, managed wildlife, etc.) vary significantly across States, Tribes, Territories, and local jurisdictions. Estimates can be derived from a variety of sources. Estimating the amount of resource needed to address animal mass care and sheltering operations will also depend on the kind and severity of the incident.

FEMA often uses an estimate figure of 10 to 15% of the evacuees will need sheltering, but in actual incidents, this number can vary widely in incidents to as low as 0.5%. Jurisdictional emergency management and human mass care partners like the Red Cross can provide additional insight on such estimates. The economic and social parameters of the community may have influences. For example, mass care sheltering usage may be lower in communities with higher average income and higher in other areas with a higher poverty level where people may not have the resources to take care of themselves and have a higher reliance on public transportation.

Household pet population estimates have additional influences. Pet ownership is higher in some regions, such as the Pacific Northwest, tends to be higher in suburban or rural communities, and tends to be lower in urban centers, particularly those with high numbers of multi-family housing (apartments, condominiums) versus single family housing.

Not all pets will need sheltering, and many owners will find accommodations for themselves and their pets with family, friends, hotels, RV parks, etc. Once community pet numbers are estimated, using a 10% figure to estimate animal sheltering needs may be appropriate model. Additionally, some pets may be separated from their owner by the incident (owners may be at work and unable to reach pets) leading to not only animal search and rescue operations, but also the need for an active pet-owner reunion effort.

Considerations

Determine human population and number of households. Knowing human populations can allow modeling of animal populations.

- US Census Bureau, Population Finder: <http://www.census.gov/>
- Oak Ridge National Laboratories maintains the LandScan database of human population for the US and globally. The product can provide very detailed information and is used for modeling population impacts for hazardous materials incidents, including radiological incidents. Jurisdictional emergency management



may already be familiar with LandScan, or a new account can be set up for pulling data from the system

- Other public records
- To determine pet and horse ownership statistics.
 - American Veterinary Medical Association posts national averages of U.S. pet ownership at: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/reports-statistics/us-pet-ownership-statistics>
 - One copy is provided free to AVMA member veterinarians and additional copies are available for purchase to non-members
 - Including a veterinarian who is an AMVA member in the planning team could allow access to detailed information in the document, providing a more tailored estimate based on state and jurisdictional parameters
 - Horse estimates are national averages, which are subject to substantial variation among states and locations. Other sources may be better for estimating jurisdictional horse populations.
- National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy
<http://www.petpopulation.org/faq.html>
 - Resources from this group are behind a membership firewall but including members of the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement in planning discussions may provide access to these organizations

The American Pet Product Association maintains a very detailed National Pet Owners Survey. Unfortunately, the document is available only for purchase and is generally too costly for emergency management use.

Estimate Livestock Numbers for the Area:

- USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>
- National livestock associations (listing at <https://www.agmrc.org/directories-state-resources/related-directories/national-commodity-and-agricultural-organization-sites>)
- State, Tribal, Territorial, or local livestock associations: SLTT agricultural agencies may have a listing

Appendix C: Shelter Setup and Creating a Site Plan

The mechanics of setting up (and breaking down) the shelter should be developed and exercised in advance. Exercises will:

- Identify how long it might take
- Improve efficiently
- Identify additional needed supplies, equipment, or training

A site plan identifies:

- The building layout
- Where different areas of the shelter are located
- Entrances and exits
- Roads, parking, storage, and other areas of the shelter site
- Locations of fire extinguishers, utility shut-off valves, and other safety systems

A site plan is sometimes required by Incident Command or the jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center (ICS form 208). Posting of the site plan within the shelter for staff to reference is recommended. Even if the site plan is not posted, ensure that safety information (e.g., location of fire extinguishers and emergency exits) is posted in all areas of the shelter.

Considerations

In preparing for disasters, coordinate with the emergency operations center within your jurisdiction in identifying and assessing potential shelter locations for animal-only, colocated, and cohabitated shelters. The pet shelter must be coordinated with human sheltering sites, which are pre-identified by the parish/county.

- Review the shelter set-up strategy and consider a site walkthrough with key players so everyone is familiar with the plan.

Although every shelter may have specific supply and equipment needs, there are several items that virtually all emergency animal shelters need. SOPs should be outlined in all briefings and included in volunteer and staff manuals and training materials. It may also be helpful to post them at appropriate locations throughout the shelter (for example, “Hands should be washed before touching any animal” can be posted over a hand-sanitizing station)

- Keep species separated and create locations for isolation (disease concerns) and quarantine (bite related) within each species.

Having cash on hand will be important during shelter set-up to purchase last-minute needs for both animals and staff (food, construction incidentals, etc.). If power is off, ATMs will be unavailable, and vendors may be unable to process credit or debit cards.



Have memorandums in place prior to evacuation for feeding and housing staff. Vendors can often be identified pre-event for gas, food, lodging, mobile showers and bathrooms, generator plug in, etc.

Adequate ventilation and good air quality within animal housing are important to minimize disease spread and odor. Consider fan placement or any air conditioning or air exchange units when evaluating your potential shelter site. Metal buildings without insulation, even with mobile AC plugged in, often cannot cool to appropriate levels and should not be used in Southern climates during hot weather.

- Be sure to inspect the wiring, plumbing, and other utilities of a facility to ensure that your use of that facility will not overload its capacity.
- Will the configuration and resources (smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.) of the facility allow you to meet OSHA requirements for safety and health?

Additional Suggestions

For NGOs, make sure your memorandum of understanding/agreement is in place and signed by local government leaders before the event. These are often difficult to procure once an event begins. Site-use agreements should also be in place, ensuring that you have all current contact numbers.

When considering staffing needs, allow for shift changes and illness. Build in contingencies and cross-train to develop depth in each position.

- Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand. It's difficult to prepare for every eventuality, so flexibility and resilience go a long way.

You will need a clean-up area large enough to rinse off cage trays, water bowls, and other materials. Ensure adequate drainage. Make sure you consider any bio-waste and hazardous materials issues (especially in flood response) and have a means to safely dispose of them (which does not include flushing them down the drain).

Use the largest cages you can, even for cats. Smaller animals (like cats) that will remain in cages for more than a day will need space to eat, drink, and sleep (and, for cats, a litter box). Minimally, a dog should be able to stand up, sit down, and turn around in his/her cage. Plan for large or extra-large wire crates at the site for both cats and dogs to ensure proper ventilation.

Using 5'x5' or 10'x5' panels to make kennels for dogs is very helpful if you have access to those materials and makes cleaning kennels much less labor intensive. Tops may need to be covered to avoid escape.



Wire cages and/or kennel panels may sometimes be borrowed from CART and SART-type teams as well as some regional response teams or other national groups. Assess whether you have enough materials on hand to set up a shelter ahead of time and reach out to other groups before a disaster strikes.

Consider the length of time each animal will be confined. You should provide more space if the animal is to be confined for more than a few days. Larger housing allows for more movement and less stress on the animals. Additionally, longer confinement in small spaces can be detrimental to an animal's health and well-being.

- Space crates as far away from each other as possible to reduce stress and disease spread.
- Plan to place barriers (broken-down cardboard boxes, wood, blankets, etc.) between crates to minimize the stress of animals, barking, and to help prevent the spread of contagious diseases. Plan to disinfect or replace the barriers regularly.
- Setup of crates with appropriate supplies (bowls, blankets, litter box for cats, etc.) often takes longer than expected. Schedule enough time to complete the shelter setup before any animals are brought into the facility.

Keep the shelter human-friendly as well as pet-friendly. It is a stressful time for everyone, so make sure there are quiet areas to work, eat, and rest (as well as a visitation area for families and pets).

Plan the exit strategy as soon as the shelter is set up. The decision to shut down the shelter can come quickly, and you must be ready to act on a plan.



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Appendix D: Understanding the Legal Issues Surrounding Animal Sheltering

Planning for an emergency animal shelter should take into consideration legal concerns that are likely to arise relating to the operation. These can include everything from ownership of the animals and disposition of unclaimed animals, to whether an organization's general liability insurance covers operations outside its facility, to how long a "holding period" is.

Having an attorney on the planning committee and/or available for legal advice throughout the emergency shelter operation can help avoid potentially costly and difficult legal predicaments. **This chapter provides awareness of certain issues but does not contain legal advice.**

Considerations

Generally, in a disaster, all animals without known owners in an emergency shelter should be considered "displaced, owned animals (or property)" – not strays. This may require adjustments in what treatment, vaccinations, or other care can be given to the animals without the owner's permission, as well as whether the animal can be relocated or transferred to another organization.

Use of a facility as an emergency animal shelter should be documented in a written lease/agreement, covering all activities, liabilities, expectations, and responsibilities of each party.

Determine whether your general liability insurance policy will cover activities outside the normal facility. If not, investigate a "rider" or alternative insurance for the duration of the sheltering activity.

Do your state's Good Samaritan laws cover actions your staff and volunteers take on behalf of the animals in your care? Make sure you identify such conditions in the planning process. Have you asked your volunteers to sign a Waiver of Liability, taking personal responsibility for their actions and releasing your organization from liability in case of illness, injury or death?

Have you documented that staff and volunteers have the appropriate training and expertise to perform the activities they are assigned to do in your emergency shelter? Have veterinary professionals working with you been appropriately licensed in the state where you are working? Alternately, does the State provide a provision/process for



emergency reciprocity of licensure for veterinarians during disasters? This usually needs to be done through the State Board of Veterinary Medicine.

Observe all local bite reporting and quarantine requirements. Have a written bite/injury protocol for anyone who is injured.

Will your agency or organization's Worker's Compensation insurance cover affiliated volunteers with your organization? How about spontaneous volunteers? If you are responding under a local government agency's authority, will that agency's liability insurance cover your staff and/or volunteers? If volunteers are expected to cover injury or illness through personal insurance, do all volunteers have personal insurance?

Who will determine the Hold Period for unclaimed animals? In normal times, this issue is guided by an SLTT ordinance relating to "stray" animals. In disasters, this may need to be adjusted by the appropriate authority. Questions to consider include:

- When does the holding period begin?
- How long is appropriate to allow owners to find and claim their animal(s)?
- How will unclaimed animals be disposed of? (Adoption, transfer, etc.)

Develop policies and procedures in case your emergency animal shelter encounters suspected animal abuse, animal fighting, illegal exotics, or other "special cases." Who will have the authority to make euthanasia decisions and take that responsibility?

Tips

- Include legal personnel on your planning committee and have them available for questions/issues that arise before, during, and after the sheltering period.
- Ensure you have documented the training and experience of all personnel and staff, as well as volunteers, and only assign them to duties you are confident they are qualified to perform.
- Ensure appropriate supervision of staff and volunteers during response. Use ICS principles to ensure an appropriate span of control of 2-7 persons per supervisor.
- Communicate to all personnel the SOPs derived from all areas of the "Considerations" above.
- Document everything! Keep important documents in a safe and secure location. Make required reports in a timely and professional manner.
- Maintain all animal-related records for at least a year following the emergency shelter operation, or as directed by the jurisdictional authorities. Legal questions sometimes arise long after you have ceased the emergency operation.

Appendix E: Formulating and Sharing Job Descriptions

In formulating job descriptions, develop organizational charts that delineate the chain of command. Identify essential staffing needs to effectively run an emergency animal shelter at various scales/sizes. Develop job descriptions and responsibilities for emergency animal shelter staff and volunteer positions. Inform/train staff and volunteers on their specific responsibilities and the emergency animal shelter functions.

Considerations

Identify essential staffing needs. Incident Command Staff and General Staff positions have descriptions in FEMA standardization. Detailed information about ICS and positions can be found at: <https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/>.

In addition, the Animal Emergency Management Command and Coordination Current Best Practices document provides information on these positions. In all cases where ICS is used to organize an animal sheltering team, the overall leader is the Shelter Manager and not “Incident Commander.”

Some critical job responsibility areas other than the Command and General staff include but are not limited to:

- Animal intake and ID
- Documentation, and animal-owner reunification
- Handling of unidentified animals, livestock, exotic, etc.
- Biosecurity, isolation, and quarantines
- Animal mortality management
- Animal, staff, volunteer, and facility security
- Owner responsibilities
- Animal holding periods
- Animal care management
- Veterinary care and triage
- Volunteer management
- Supply intake, organization, tracking, and utilization
- Operations Team
 - Intake/Disposition Supervisor
 - Animal Care Supervisor
 - Barn or Team Leaders
 - Volunteer Manager
 - Veterinary Care Supervisor (Small, Large, Exotic)
 - Logistics Manager



- Animal Transport/Transfer Supervisor
- Supply/Donations Supervisor

Appendix F: Human Resource Needs and Issues

The Human Resources Manager is the person responsible for the policies and processes for managing both staff and volunteers. The HR Manager is a key element in whether you can successfully operate an emergency animal shelter.

If using ICS, the HR element falls within the Finance and Administration Section. Some HR functions intersect with Command and General Staff positions and will be noted below.

The human resources manager is responsible for recruitment, orientation/training, record keeping of all personal data, appraisals, and possible termination of staff and volunteers. Because of the scope of these responsibilities, the human resources manager will have one of the most important jobs of the entire emergency sheltering operation.

Their top priority will be to make sure that all the staff and volunteers are placed in the right areas based on their level of expertise. The operational supervisors make sure staff and volunteers carry out their responsibilities safely and effectively, according to the job description specifications.

A safe, supportive, and productive work environment should be created and maintained, and once established, should be implemented consistently, fairly, and promptly.

Employee and volunteer handbooks and policy manuals should be implemented. Issues such as sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, discrimination, and safety and security measures should be clearly addressed, along with the emergency shelter's mission and expectations.

Considerations

- Make sure HR rules and policies are clear and communicated to every person working within or with the shelter.
- Ensure that contact information is up to date.
- Determine which health information is relevant to positions and maintain such information in accordance with Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act, such as vaccination records, physician's contact information, emergency contact, organ donor status, medical concerns/ allergies/medications, etc.
- Institute uniform and ID requirements to clearly identify your team, whether through tee-shirts, badges, or other means. Uniform in an emergency animal shelter should always require, at the least, long pants and sturdy, closed-toed shoes.

- Every time someone enters the shelter, they should sign in. Conversely, everyone should sign out if they leave for lunch or an errand, and again at the end of their shift. This serves multiple purposes, including for safety in the event of a shelter evacuation, and to record hours for possible reimbursement (See Administration section).
- Designate specific smoking and eating areas and no smoking should be allowed anywhere within the shelter. Eating should be confined to designated areas for health, sanitation, and safety reasons. (Intersects with Safety Officer)
- Have a code of conduct: Ensure that everyone knows how they are expected to behave as part of your team, and what the consequences are if the expectations are not met. Post the code in a prominent location so that it can be referenced easily.
- Have a policy on interaction with media. Ensure everyone knows who the PIO and shelter managers are on every shift, with their contact information. Others should not interact with the media unless authorized to do so.
- Establish grievance procedures to hear and act fairly on grievances.
- Set up a reporting structure for illness or accidents. Make sure everyone knows who the Safety Officer is for their shift. (Intersects with Safety Officer)
- Write some FAQs (frequently asked questions) for staff and volunteers: This will, to some extent, depend on the circumstances of the disaster and the emergency animal sheltering operation. Post answers at a convenient location (for example, near the break room) to maximize the impact.
- As per the sheltering plan and legal advice, have volunteers sign a Waiver of Liability form before they are allowed to work in the emergency animal shelter.

Tips

Human resource management, under the best of conditions, is a challenging task. In a disaster situation, you need someone with a great deal of patience, a good strategic view of what's needed, and an appropriate, sensitive, sense of humor.

Don't burn out your best HR people in the first few days of an operation. As time goes on, the challenges of the operation will be heightened by fatigue and short tempers. Always try to have a manager who can keep things on an even keel.

Appendix G: Formulating Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Identify areas of responsibility where volunteers will be needed. Develop volunteer job descriptions, liability waivers, identification badges, minimum standards of conduct, and termination protocols before a disaster situation. Understand the Good Samaritan laws and have signed waivers.

A volunteer manager should be appointed and oversee the screening and interviewing of all spontaneous volunteers, as well as monitoring the active volunteer pool. As completely as possible, check on backgrounds and reported expertise or experience. Train all volunteers (affiliated or spontaneous) and document the training; it is an important part of risk management.

Volunteers should understand their specific roles and responsibilities, as well as understand the chain of command and how they fit in. Procedures for documenting and monitoring volunteer shifts should be devised. Determine how volunteer relief and shift changes will be conducted and recorded.

Documentation of performance for future reference should be included in volunteer files.

Considerations

- Develop a list of affiliated volunteers and other groups within a 100-mile radius.
- Develop volunteer job descriptions, liability waivers, ID badges, a code of conduct, and termination protocols.
- Appoint qualified and trained Volunteer Managers for every shift of the operation.
- Based on the scope of the disaster and the type of emergency animal sheltering needed, determine the number of volunteers required; the roles and responsibilities that need to be filled; and the number of shifts with a shift relief schedule.
- Train all volunteers and give them a situational orientation upon arrival at the shelter (or before).

Tips

- Because some local volunteers may be affected by the disaster and can't respond during the initial phase, training, and cross-training your pool of affiliated volunteers during pre-disaster planning is critical.
- Practice drills should be scheduled regularly and include other emergency response groups.
- The following training and management resources may be helpful:

- 
- FEMA Independent Study Program IS-244b, Developing and Managing Volunteers
 - International City Management Association
 - National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
 - Volunteer Management Committee
 - US Department of Justice – Unaffiliated volunteer guidance
 - Mississippi State University Extension

Appendix H: Just in Time Training (JITT) for Emergent or Unaffiliated Volunteers

Just-in-time training (JITT) is the practice of providing training immediately before its usage. The advantage of implementing JITT is the shortened time between learning and application. JITT is a way to streamline educating the workforce. Among the benefits of this kind of staff development is that you can train employees or volunteers in multiple areas in a near-automated fashion.

Volunteers are the backbone of an animal disaster response and need to be made to feel like they are part of your team. Their energies must be focused and directed toward the mission of the operation, or they risk conflict, disruption, and an unsafe working environment.

A volunteer application should be utilized for all new volunteers. The application should give you information on what training the volunteer has had; their areas of expertise; what inoculations they have received; any medical or physical concerns; their emergency contact information; and any other information you feel you need for participation in your response. Organizations should work with their legal counsel and the lead governmental partner on whether criminal background and sex offender screening are necessary.

During a disaster, the necessary pool of workers may expand to include those with skills that may be useful beyond animal care roles. This may include bilingual skills, data entry, construction/building trades (e.g., plumbing, electrical), communication, etc. You may even be able to recruit volunteers for grief counselors, accountants, and more. But they, just like your everyday staff, need to be managed if they are to be effective.

Following the application screening, all emergent volunteers should receive an orientation including and explanation of what your mission is; the chain of command and to whom they report; where first aid, food and bathroom facilities can be found; what their assigned schedule is, and so on.

It's best to use the "buddy" system or mentoring type training program by assigning the emergent volunteer to someone on staff that has already been trained and evaluated and can be relied on to instruct the emergent volunteer in their duties in their assigned area.



Considerations

In developing a training strategy, you should also consider the following processes and tasks:

- Fully developed job descriptions for each possible position a volunteer can fill
- Application and release waiver
- Policy on criminal background checks and sex offender screening.
- Volunteer manual
- Orientation/Training procedures
- Safety and liability planning
- Scheduling
- Supervision and evaluation
- Recognition

Tips

- Develop a thorough Volunteer Application outlining a volunteer's background, skills, and physical abilities.
- Just-in-time volunteers should also receive a manual (a written guide), which includes:
 - An organization chart, including whom they report to and the Safety Officer
 - Policies and procedures
 - Expectations
 - How they can get guidance or assistance if needed
 - Your organization's role in the response
 - Outline of what volunteers are, and are not, allowed to do

Resources

Iowa State University Center for Food Security and Public Health: Just-in-time training resources for responders, including animal sheltering training:

<https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/emergency-response/just-in-time-training/>.

Appendix I: Setting up Safety and Security Policies and Procedures

Disaster areas are potentially dangerous places, not only because of natural hazards but also due to a lack of normal safeguards and behaviors. Your emergency animal shelter will need to consider putting in place safety and security policies to protect the animals, workers, families, and everyone who comes through the shelter.

Facility Security

- Limit entry and egress to specific locations and sign in and out all persons entering
- Coordinate with incident authorities to determine if paid security officers are needed. If appropriate, appoint a security officer to work under the Safety Officer.
- Establish contacts (in addition to 911) for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services
- Consider the onsite shelter checklist in Appendix C, Attachment 5 of this document.
- Determine the complete footprint of your shelter site and what areas will have various restrictions:
 - Administration offices, meeting rooms, kitchens, and eating areas, staff parking areas, dedicated facility storage areas, roof access/catwalks, loading dock, restrooms, stairwells, staff break areas, etc.
- Determine areas that require additional restricted access and/or surveillance, such as:
 - Veterinary areas, animal isolation areas, medical storage, drug storage (always keep locked)
 - Communications/computer areas, general storage, kennel areas, loading dock

Fire and Safety Code Compliance

- Establish a liaison with the local fire department
 - Ensure that the facility meets local fire/safety codes (depends upon facility).
- Ensure that the facility meets federal OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) safety codes.
- Post fire extinguisher and emergency exit signs prominently within the facility
- Control where people can smoke

Evacuation and Emergency Plans

- Establish a plan to evacuate or relocate shelter personnel and/or animals:
 - Should you shelter in place or move?
 - Who will make the decision?
- Stay in touch with incident authorities pertaining to hazard updates
- Monitor weather and other emergency situations. Communicate any threats or events.
- What is the plan for service outages or failure?
 - Water
 - Electrical
 - Sewer/waste disposal
 - Communication
 - Climate control (e.g., AC/heat)

Animal Safety and Security

- Consider having copies of records with photographs of all animals in the shelter, kept in a secure location.
- Consider a perimeter fence around the area for security and a double barrier system to prevent escapes.
- Consider safe and secure caging of animals. Mitigate against dogs digging or climbing out of a kennel area.
- Take precautions against the theft of animals
 - Animals only discharged in an approved process
 - No unauthorized persons in the kennel area
- Proper handling equipment and equipment training.
- Proper animal handling training.
- Plan for proper disease control/biosecurity protocols
- Consider vaccination protocols for the shelter in collaboration with a vet support team.
- Consider shift checks of animals and supply inventory.

Human Safety and Security

- Determine what incidents are documented and tracked
- Require staff and volunteers to report safety or security incidents
- How are security incidents documented and tracked?
- Contact local law enforcement when needed.
- Maintain awareness of hazards:
 - Slips and falls
 - Maintain Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on all hazardous chemicals used
 - Injuries and dog bites: jurisdictional protocols should be followed for rabies prevention

- 
- Cat bites and scratches require immediate attention, and treatment should follow state protocol for rabies prevention
 - Identify and address stress among staff/volunteers/victims.
 - Restrict access to drug/medical supply storage.
 - Develop clear policies prohibiting the use of illegal substances, illegal activities, weapons, sexual harassment, or inappropriate behavior
 - Medical issues and first aid: Consider the following:
 - Establish protocols for first aid and contacting 911 (fire, emergency medical services)
 - Establish the location and messaging of the first aid station
 - Maintain recordkeeping of injuries and illness
 - Create a medical plan (ICS form 206) that identifies:
 - Urgent care locations
 - Hospital emergency rooms
 - Train supervisors and managers in psychological first aid and identify sources of critical incident stress professionals within the incident and response partners



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Appendix J: Psychological First Aid – Secondary Trauma and Counseling Services

Working with animals impacted by disaster, and/or with families who have lost family members, pets, or their homes can be an emotionally and physically draining experience. Whether assisting with the care of an injured animal or comforting a family seeking a lost animal, responders often experience secondary trauma as they internalize the experiences and emotions of those they are trying to help.

Response to the stressors can take many forms and often will result in diminished capabilities and possible long-term psychological or emotional issues for those involved. Managers and supervisors will need to recognize symptoms of critical incident stress and use the principles of psychological first aid to help their staff and volunteers through these reactions.

Psychological first aid starts with listening and then helps guide people to find appropriate counseling or personal care strategies that will allow them to continue their work and heal.

Considerations

Recognize that no one who responds to a disaster will be untouched by it. Long shifts or deployment, lack of information, extreme weather, difficult working environments, lack of utilities, resource shortages, and other factors can add to the responder's stress. This is in addition to the stress already felt because of injured or sick animals, and distraught owners.

There are several ways in which secondary psychological trauma, which is somewhat akin to compassion fatigue, may manifest itself, including physical, behavioral, or psychological signs that are abnormal to the individual.

Assisting animals in disaster can also bring comfort to those in an emergency animal shelter. For those who need a break, sometimes a few minutes of petting a friendly dog, or a purring cat can help relieve stress.

Tips

Effective management and communication will help to mitigate systemic stress. Make sure everyone understands the daily mission and their part in it, so that they can keep perspective on the positive aspects of their activities.



Have at least some staff trained to recognize signs of secondary or primary trauma. Initiate a discreet reporting mechanism to allow appropriate resources to reach affected individuals.

Some other tips include:

- Ensure that self-care methods are included in your human resource plan.
- Train managers and supervisors to watch for signs of secondary trauma. Encourage all staff and volunteers to practice self-care methods and to “buddy” with another responder to encourage self-care awareness.
- Daily debriefings and a post-response debrief, will help staff and volunteers to share their experiences and feelings. Just as with victims of primary trauma, it is helpful for many who have experienced secondary trauma to talk about their experiences to a sympathetic person.
- In severe primary psychological trauma incidents, however, only mental health care professionals should evaluate the need for or conduct group debriefing.
- If someone on your team is experiencing secondary trauma, take appropriate actions to mitigate the stress and/or allow them to transfer or withdraw from the situation.
- Recognize and follow health care privacy protocols to ensure discretion regarding any personnel medical or psychological issues.

Resources

- American Psychological Association webpage on Psychological First Aid: <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/psychological-first-aid> (click on the resources image for a generous list of resources).
- Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Psychological First Aid for First Responders: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Psychological-First-Aid-for-First-Responders/NMH05-0210>.

Appendix K: Setting up Intake/Triage Systems and Protocols

The intake process of the shelter is a critical element in determining whether you will be able to keep track of animals and return them to their families. Because of this, you must consider what information you will need and how you will process the animal(s) as it enters the shelter system.

Intake

As an animal enters your emergency animal shelter, you will need to capture vital information to help identify it, verify the ownership, and begin tracking its physical and medical progress through your facility. You can also do a quick assessment of any behavioral or other issues that may influence how the animal is processed or housed.

Some of the information you should capture at this point include:

- Species, breed/type (e.g., “Lab mix”, “DSH” or “hound type”)
- Color/pattern
- Size (actual weight if possible or approximation: small, medium, large)
- Hair length and quality (e.g., curly, wirehair, etc.)
- Sex, if spayed/neutered (if known)
- Name (if known)
- Approximate age
- Owner contact information (if known or location where the animal was recovered)
- Vaccination status if known
- Microchip information (Universal scanners should be used whenever possible for intake)
- Photograph (preferably with the owner - if present)
- Distinguishing marks
- Physical/medical/behavioral status

Standard intake forms have been adopted by most of the national animal rescue and shelter organizations. In other cases, organizations operating emergency animal shelters may have access to software platforms that will take the place of forms.

Multiple people may be needed to perform intake and triage, including people with clear penmanship (or good typing skills if you are using a computer) and others with good “people skills,” so that they can explain the process and respond to any questions or concerns that owners have. Also, people with good technical knowledge of breeds, colors and other animal features are needed.



If the animals are being brought in by rescuers instead of owners, try to ascertain where the animal was found or rescued from. Getting good information at this point will help alleviate problems during the animal's stay and will help you reunite the animals with their owners.

Assign each animal a unique, identifying number at intake, so that you can track the animal throughout the process and document observations or treatment. If a mother dog or cat comes in with a litter, you can use one unique number for the mother (e.g., 165) and then each puppy or kitten would get a letter also (e.g., 165a, 165b).

Be very careful to keep a copy of all intake information safe and secure as this is your primary compilation of information on the animals in your facility! Make backup copies if you can and keep them in a separate area in case working copies are destroyed or lost. Software platforms may automatically create backup information.

Triage

The Veterinary Medical Response Current Best Practices document will provide a much more extensive discussion of veterinary triage.

Whenever possible, triage or physical assessment of each animal should take place at the time of intake. Therefore, the triage area needs to be set up near, but still separate and quiet from, the intake area. The priorities of triage are:

- To prevent infectious diseases (e.g., viral infection, intestinal parasites), including zoonotic diseases that can spread between humans and animals
- Identify health conditions that will require veterinary care (as assign a priority to such care)
- Identify behaviors that can constitute a hazard to either people or other animals

In some cases, preventative treatments may be combined with triage or may be provided as a separate step.

During the physical exam, the veterinarian will be looking for signs of upper respiratory illness, stress-related behaviors, aggression, open or abscessed wounds, broken bones, infections of any kind, fleas/ticks, parasites, skin problems, eye problems, gastrointestinal diseases, possible pregnancy, need for decontamination, etc.

Based on the outcome of the assessment or triage, assisting kennel staff or veterinary technicians will take the animal, along with an Animal Care Record outlining daily treatment, to its assigned cage.



In many cases, vaccinations will be given upon intake to mitigate the spread of disease. Viruses that can pose a problem in an emergency shelter situation are Kennel Cough Complex (dogs) and Upper Respiratory Infection (cats).

Like our colds, these viruses are spread through the air and the hands and clothing of volunteers or by objects (fomites). Animals with known current vaccination (e.g. the owner has such records) do not need to be vaccinated.

Depending on the unique circumstances of individual disasters or emergency responses, preventative care may or may not include:

- Basic vaccinations
- Deworming
- Flea treatment
- Treatment for minor injuries
- Minimal grooming
- Microchipping

Considerations

The initial triage may be performed by a veterinary technician or experienced veterinary assistance, with veterinarians available to examine animals with significant findings.

Needs may vary from disaster to disaster. The final selection of equipment/supplies is at the discretion of the veterinarian in charge.

Tips

Things that could be set up ahead of time include:

- Coordination of triage and veterinary care services with veterinary medical teams/local veterinary professionals
- Scheduling of veterinarians and vet technicians needed in advance.
- Prior arrangements with community veterinary facilities might be needed for complicated cases or that require specialized diagnostic or other equipment.



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Appendix L: Cleaning, Disinfection, and Biosecurity

Emergency animal shelters can offer infectious disease hazards for animals and humans. Because of stress, disaster hazards, intermingling of species, and other factors, it is more likely that animals will be exposed to infectious agents, vermin, and other potential threats than they would in their normal environment. It is critical to take precautions to minimize these threats within the emergency animal shelter.

Diseases can be spread through contact with surfaces or objects (e.g. ringworm); through feces, saliva, and other bodily functions (parvo, feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), intestinal parasites); through the air (upper respiratory infection (URI), Kennel cough), or insect or animal bites (e.g., rabies, heartworm).

Additionally, if precautions are not taken to store food (human and animal) properly, it can spoil or become infested with pests. Emergency shelters generally have limited facilities for refrigeration or freezing and, in hot weather, can become a breeding ground for food-borne bacteria.

Human diseases such as hepatitis can also be spread through poor hygiene and improper procedures within the animal shelter. Building protection from these threats should be an important part of your shelter planning and implementation.

Biosecurity measures are designed to control and prevent the introduction or spread of disease. Biosecurity measures should reflect the CDC NIOSH Hierarchy of Controls which demonstrates the mechanism of controls from the most effective to the least. These controls include:

- Elimination (cleaning and disinfection)
- Substitution (such as using a safer disinfectant)
- Engineering controls (such as using non-porous surfaces)
- Administrative controls (Operational protocols that reduce exposure, such as isolation of sick animals, limiting access to animals, washing hands between handling different animals, etc.)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) which is the least effective control measure and is used as the final barrier to control infection.

Considerations

Written cleaning and disinfecting protocols should be established and effectively communicated regularly to staff and volunteers. These protocols should be posted prominently in the shelter for incoming shifts and covered during shift briefings. Mixing directions and contact time per product labels should be followed to ensure an effective level of disinfecting.



Appropriate cleaning materials should be used, and a standardized method of cleaning should be established that limits or prevents the spread of disease. If separate staff and volunteers cannot be used for cleaning areas with healthy animals and those areas with animals in quarantine or isolation, then healthy animals should be cared for first, followed by animals in quarantine (bite protocols), and then animals in isolation.

PPE such as gloves should be changed between kennels, hands should be properly washed, and footbaths should be used when moving from one area to another. Separate equipment should also be used for each area to limit cross-contamination.

Staff should be trained to wash their hands after touching each animal or its enclosure. If available, staff should wear “exam”-type gloves to clean cages or handle animals, properly disposing of them after each use. Sick animals must be quarantined away from healthy animals. A separate area may be needed for injured animals; mothers with babies; those recuperating from medical procedures; and other special- needs animals not suffering from infectious diseases.

Multiple isolation areas may be needed, based on species, and based on mode of transmission. For example, sick dogs and cats may need separate areas. A dog with an abscess or skin infection should not be placed in an isolation area with dogs that have respiratory infections

Locate isolation areas so that animals can be moved in and out without exposing healthy animals. If an outdoor entrance is not available, consider placing the isolation area in a less heavily trafficked area such as the back of the shelter or where people moving in and out can be regulated.

If the ability to organize personnel is possible, using a ‘pod system’ or compartmentalization can be effective. When an infectious disease occurs in one group, that pod can be closed off from the rest of the population. When proper biosecurity is practiced, this structure can significantly reduce the spread of disease.

Isolation areas ideally should have a separate sink for hand washing and treatment purposes, air flow with exhaust separated from other animal housing areas, surfaces, and materials that are easy to clean and disinfect, items that are easy to sanitize or are disposable, sanitation systems that do not expose healthy animals in the process (proper drainage systems), complete separation from healthy animals and quarantine areas and cages or kennels that prevent direct contact between animals.



In some cases, it may be possible to move animals with infectious diseases completely out of the emergency animal shelter to a veterinary facility with better isolation capabilities. This would be particularly useful for severe diseases, like a puppy with suspected parvovirus enteritis that needs aggressive monitoring and treatment.

Clear signage identifying the area as an 'isolation area' is also critical to prevent staff and volunteers from entering.

Separate equipment and supplies used exclusively for the isolation area are also critical. A designated storage area should also be established to store biosecurity items such as PPE (Tyvek suits, gloves, disposable shoe covers, protective eyewear, gowns/aprons, rubber boots), treatment cart, hand soap and sanitizer, paper towels, garbage bags, garbage can and other specific equipment necessary for this area.

Food stores should be sealed and secured to minimize contamination by insects, vermin, or weather. Any contaminated items should be disposed of immediately.

Establish protocols that identify when to use extremely strict adherence to using PPE, such as isolation areas. Post signage listing the required PPE to enter the area, and protocols for use and disposal of the equipment at the entrance to isolation areas.

Develop training for staff and volunteers on proper use of PPE to limit mistakes such as cross- contamination. Also ensure that staff and volunteers are trained on the appropriate disposal of PPE (e.g. how to disinfect if using rubber boots, using the appropriate trash receptacles in the isolation area to dispose of rubber gloves, Tyvek suits, and other items, to prevent these items from leaving the isolation area.

Safety officers should be aware of all activities in isolation areas and oversee strict protocols.

Tips

- Cleaning and disinfecting are different procedures – and BOTH are critical to maintaining a healthy emergency animal shelter.
- Cleaning involves the removal of dirt and organic debris since most disinfectants are inactivated by organic material. Cleaning should always be done FIRST
- Beware of products ending in “-sol” for use around animals - especially cats - because they contain phenol, which is poisonous to cats and can be dangerous for dogs as well.
- No one product does everything, and disinfectants should be selected based on the environment and risk.

- Do not mix chemicals or move substances from their original containers to unmarked containers.
- Have Safety Data Sheets available for every substance used in the shelter. The Safety Officer should have a copy as well.
- Your emergency shelter should meet Federal OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards on sanitation.
- Consider what surface(s) you are using the cleaning or disinfecting product on – and what effects that substance will have on the surface material.
- Diluted bleach (or other appropriate disinfectants), paper towels, and other necessities should always be available to disinfect surfaces.
- If animals are identified with serious, infectious health concerns (e.g., parvo), their isolation area should be “Off Limits” to all personnel except those with experience and expertise to care for them. Bleach foot baths and other mechanisms should be set up to minimize the escape of contaminants from the isolation area.
- Make sure staff and volunteers are trained in safe animal handling techniques and use appropriate equipment.

An often-overlooked source for contamination is an ice-chest or cooler. Staff and volunteers who have been working with animals (and probably have not stopped to wash their hands) reach into the ice to pull out a can of soda or bottle of water. They then drink directly from that receptacle – picking up bacteria that have been left in the ice off their hands and those of others. To minimize this danger: assign one volunteer or staffer to “man” the cooler. Wearing gloves, he/she should dispense all drinks from the chest, handing them to the requester.

Diseases are spread by various routes of transmission including direct contact, indirect transfer by fomites, aerosol, oral, and vector transmission. For direct contact transmission, isolation of infected animals and the use of PPE can limit and prevent the disease from spreading to healthy animals. Cleaning and disinfecting measures can be effective in reducing contamination where the route of disease transmission involves oral routes or indirect transfer by fomites.

In situations where the route of transmission includes aerosols, isolation of infected animals and proper use of PPE can also limit and prevent transmission to healthy animals. Pest management, minimizing tall vegetation, and standing water around the shelter may be necessary to limit the transmission of vector-borne diseases.

Resources

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- CDC Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/animalhealthguidelines.html>.
 - Iowa State University Center for Food Security and Public Health provides extensive information on cleaning and disinfection:
 - <https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/infection-control/disinfection/>
 - <http://cfsph.iastate.edu/pdf/fad-prep-nahems-guidelines-cleaning-and-disinfection>



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Appendix M: Meeting the Needs of the Animals

The entire operation of an emergency animal shelter is geared towards one goal: keeping animals safe and healthy at a time when disaster has disrupted their lives and families. Thus, meeting their needs should be the paramount factor in your planning and operation.

Animals are not meant to be kept in cages or crates for long periods. They will become stressed, depressed, and unhealthy if they are confined to small spaces with minimal enrichment, insufficient contact with people, and the opportunity to exercise and play. For that reason, we strongly encourage a limited-time shelter operation, with as many built-in stress reduction and enrichment elements as possible, and creative options for longer-term care if necessary.

The form that these enrichment elements take will depend on the species and your capabilities. However, we cannot stress strongly enough our belief that the welfare of the animals depends on having not just food, water, and a dry place to sleep, but also is contingent upon the “extra” factors inherent in cleanliness, quiet, compassion, and opportunities to exercise and play.

Some things we recommend for all animals in the shelter:

- An inventory of animals should be taken daily and checked against intake/reclaim records.
- Cage cards and Medical/Animal Care Cards should also be checked daily and updated as appropriate.
- Temporary ID collars (such as Tyvek bands) can help maintain animal identification.
- A crate meeting at least minimum recommendations set by the AVMA (and hopefully exceeding those standards)
- Barriers between crates to minimize the stress and spread of disease. The barrier can be as simple as a broken-down cardboard box; a blanket draped between crates; or a stack of boxes.
- Placement of animals with like breeds.
- Placement in environments conducive to their health and well-being
- Isolation and quarantine of those animals for whom it is appropriate
- The opportunity to play and use their intelligence.
- Expressions of caring and calm – from a scratch on the head to a stroke of the back to a term of endearment.

- Consistency of care – feeding, watering, cleaning and disinfecting. Animals' stress can be increased with each change of food, personnel, or routine. Keep it simple and consistent.
- “Lights Out” time. Regular downtime when all operations but the most critical cease, when lights are turned off and quiet is enforced. Nap time during the day is important, and sleep time at night is critical.
- Behavioral issues should be reported to supervisors and/or veterinarians immediately for assessment.
- Make sure to have a manual can opener on hand.

Dog-Specific Recommendations

Upon arrival, each animal should be evaluated by a veterinarian/vet tech and triaged according to a system of priorities. Depending on the unique circumstances of individual disasters or emergency responses, the care provided for these animals may or may not include:

- A physical exam
- Basic vaccinations
- Deworming
- Flea treatment
- Treatment for minor injuries
- Minimal grooming
- Microchipping

Expect animals in a disaster or emergency to be under a lot of stress. The goal is to minimize their stress while providing them with the best possible care under the circumstances.

Depending on the circumstances and available emergency sheltering facility, dogs can be exercised in two possible ways:

- Turned out to play in a large exercise pen, ensuring feces were picked up promptly.
- Walked on a leash in the designated dog walking area.

Only assigned experienced dog handlers will be allowed to walk/exercise large, hard-to-handle, or aggressive dogs. These dogs should have CAUTION signs posted on their cages.

Considerations for Canines

- Use the “buddy system.” The buddy system is a procedure in which two people operate together as a single unit so that they can monitor and help each other.

- Develop procedures and training for safely capturing an escaped dog.
- Develop feeding guidelines appropriate for species and size.
- The use of enrichment chew toys will depend on many factors and should only be considered when the toys will not present a contagion threat.
- Bedding? Remember that laundry facilities may not be available, and bedding used will have to be disposed of daily.
- Housing for nursing bitches should be in an isolated, quiet area providing privacy.
- Put an ID band (collar) on the dog, and a corresponding ID band or number on the crate/cage to avoid mix-ups in similar-looking dogs – e.g., a black lab is a black lab is a black lab.

Tips for Canines

- Always consider the use of larger crates – even for small dogs.
- Flat-bottomed water bowls or hanging buckets to avoid water spills.
- Required resources for dogs include:
 - Bowls (preferably stainless-steel flat-bottomed bowls for water)
 - Either stainless or paper trays for food; slip leads
 - Heavy-duty Kong-type chew toys appropriate for their size to keep them occupied
 - Age/size appropriate dog food of good quality to reduce loose stools.
 - Bedding, if available, is helpful, especially in cold climates or with arthritic or injured dogs.

Considerations for Felines

Cats in an emergency animal shelter are generally very stressed. They have been removed from their natural environment, with their familiar smells, sounds, and sights. Even if they are sheltered with their human companion(s), cats will react with more stress than dogs when taken from their home and “comfort zone.” They must be set up in as quiet and relaxed an area as you can manage.

Even a cat that appears to be fractious or “feral” when first brought into an emergency shelter may calm down within 24 to 48 hours if allowed peace and quiet, with time to adjust to its new surroundings.

- Cats will need to be housed separately from dogs and other species.
- Cats will need a wire crate large enough to hold a litter box, food and water bowls, a sleeping area, and ideally a place to “hide.”
- The usual rule should be “one cat per enclosure” unless it is a mother with kittens; a litter of orphan kittens; or at the owner’s request for bonded pairs.
- Try to allow cats 24 to 48 hours after coming into the shelter for them to de-stress.

- Don't clean cat areas with products ending in "-Sol" (e.g., Pine-sol, Lysol). Ingredients in them can be harmful to cats.
- Wash hands with disinfecting hand soap after touching or cleaning each cage.
- If you are feeding cats from donated food (not brought in by their owners) ideally use high-quality cat food. If a single product isn't available, try to mix different brands in one large tub. (Frequent changing of foods can cause gastrointestinal upset and result in vomiting and/or diarrhea.)
- If the cat is on a special diet or medication, place a prominent note on its cage to ensure all staff and volunteers are aware.
- If the cat is an "escape artist", place a prominent note on its cage to warn handlers to watch for escape attempts.
- Do not allow "visitors" to walk through the cat area. Only staff and volunteers who are assigned to the area should have access to all cats. Visiting families should ONLY interact with their cat(s).

Tips for Felines

- If the cat appears to be stressed, try to handle it as little as possible in the first 24 hours.
- Cats love to hide. Try to provide a space (an open airline crate, cardboard box, homemade hammock with a towel, or similar)
- Place a sign on the cage (also a towel – see highly recommended resources, below) to caution staff and others to speak quietly and avoid handling incoming cats. Even if it appears unfriendly, DON'T label the cat "feral" until a thorough evaluation can be done 24 to 48 hours after intake.
- Mother cats should be housed with their kittens (especially if the kittens are still nursing). The mother cat should receive extra food, including wet adult and/or kitten food, and an area where she can rest, away from the kittens.
- Cats that appear to be ill (especially signs of upper respiratory – sneezing, discharge from nose and/or eyes, etc.) should always be housed in an isolated area, away from apparently healthy cats. Contact with isolated cats should be limited to those caring for them, and hand sanitizer should be used after handling each cat/kitten.
- When your team is planning how many wire crates you will need for the shelter, always get most crates in Large or Extra Large. These will accommodate the needs of cats as well as larger-breed dogs.
- Required resources for cats include bowls (preferably stainless steel for water; can be stainless or paper for food), litter box, litter and scoop, and feline-and age-appropriate food (kittens may require canned food)



Highly recommended resources for sheltering cats include towels – which can be used to drape over the cage for privacy, wrap the cat for handling, create a soft bed on the crate floor, or make into a “hammock” for cat comfort and privacy; cat gloves for handling fractious cats; cat net for capture in case of escape from crate; feral cat handling system (never use catch poles on cats), newspaper, cardboard, sheets, blankets, etc. can be used to drape over cage for privacy; boxes or carriers that fit in the crate, that allow the cat(s) a place to hide within the crate and help the cat(s) calm themselves.

Often local departments or grocery stores will be happy to donate boxes from merchandise they have received and shelved. A hole is cut in the assembled box and the cat can hide/rest inside comfortably.

The daily care sheet should also be placed on the crate. Best practice is to use a clipboard, and, if possible, place the paperwork into a plastic sheet protector, to avoid having the cat reach out and shred the paperwork.

If a cat appears ill or exhibits behavior or symptoms that should be seen by the veterinary team or shelter manager, a note should be put on the daily care sheet and the information given to the appropriate authority in a timely way.

Birds

- Birds, ferrets, rabbits, and rodents are temperature-sensitive and cannot get too cold or too hot.
- Many of these animals are also stress-sensitive and may be difficult to handle or dangerous.
- Many of these animals require skilled animal handling techniques. These animals, especially some of the birds can range from small and delicate to extremely dangerous. As with other animals, they could carry zoonotic diseases.
- Captive birds often cannot survive if they end up outside on their own. They lack skills and knowledge regarding how to obtain food and water, and what foods are safe or toxic.

Birds can be aggressive and can use their beaks to bite or attack. Parrots are considered the most intelligent and can pose the biggest problems if not handled properly and with extreme caution. Because they have such powerful beaks, it's best to cover them with a towel and use gloves when handling them. If possible, the whole cage should be removed with the bird in it and transported to the emergency shelter. They are very sensitive to drafts, so a room away from doorways and traffic is ideal.



Large birds, such as emus and ostriches, may kick; raptors may use their wings or talons as weapons. Only a professional should attempt to handle a raptor. Use a towel to reduce stress and struggle, and gain control of the feet first.

Small, caged birds are easily startled. Owners should bring the entire cage with the bird during evacuation to the emergency shelter. Cover the cage with a towel to reduce stress and avoid exposure to drafts. Small birds can bite, so gloves may be necessary. Because they are small and delicate, they should be handled only when necessary and held gently but firmly to avoid escape. Handling birds in an enclosed smaller room will help avoid escape.

Poultry, including fighting birds, need to be handled gently and cautiously. Cover to avoid stress, and gain control of the feet first to avoid pecking and scratching. Geese and swans use their beaks to pinch and their wings to batter handlers. They are very aggressive when young. Water and wading birds have sharp pointed beaks and attack the faces and eyes of handlers. Safety glasses should be used as a precaution.

Considerations for Birds

- Supplies should include gloves, safety goggles, nets, large towels, newspapers to line cages, appropriate seeds for species, Quick-Stop to stop bleeding, and food/water bowls.
- Birds are sensitive to air quality. A bird replaces nearly all the air in his lungs with each breath. Because of this, they transfer more oxygen and more pollutants with each breath, and therefore, should not be exposed to cigarette smoke, chemical fumes, overheated Teflon-coated materials, and cleaners.

Rabbits

Rabbits are prey animals and easily stressed. If panicked, they will run into walls and fences resulting in serious, possibly fatal, injuries. They can die easily of heart failure if overly stressed. Rabbits will thump when they are not happy, and they can bite, scream, and growl.

They also have a delicate digestion and cannot vomit. Their diet should consist of no more than ½ pellets and a variety of leafy vegetables or high-quality hay.

A great source of information about rabbits is the House Rabbit Society – at www.Rabbit.org.

Carrying a rabbit is like carrying a cat, but rabbits are more fragile. They have very powerful legs and sharp claws and teeth. Do not lift or hold by the ears, limbs, or tail. Be sure to support the chest and hindquarters and hold very close to you for control and comfort. A towel can be used to wrap all four legs and the body into a “bunny burrito.” Gentle stroking and covering the eyes can be hypnotic and help calm the rabbit.

Considerations for Rabbits

- House rabbits in an area separate from dogs and cats. Provide a quiet, draft-free environment with room to move around as well as sleep and eat.
- Rabbits must be housed separately from guinea pigs due to Bordetella (respiratory infection agent) risk.
- Supply resources include a pole- or throw-net, folding day pens for exercise, litter boxes for litter training, bowls for pellets, and a drip water bottle.
- Free-feed alfalfa or Timothy hay, and portions of timothy-based pellets and fresh vegetables (see the list on the House Rabbit Society website). Always have fresh water available.
- Be careful with fruits (some are good, some bad). Never feed a rabbit chocolate, bread, crackers, or other potentially toxic foods (see <http://rabbit.org/what-to-feed-your-rabbit/> for additional feeding tips).
- Stress signs include rapid breathing, enlarged eyes, shaking, screaming, tightening into a ball, teeth grinding, and thumping feet. Rabbits are highly prone to heat stress. In hot conditions, utilize frozen gallons of water and place them in a cage to help keep them cool.
- Never place more than 2 rabbits in a carrier together, ensuring same-sex only. Rabbits can crush or suffocate each other due to fear.

Ferrets

Ferrets are very social creatures and can be very affectionate. But ferrets, like rabbits, birds, and other pocket pets, are susceptible to stress and can become physically ill with ulcers and other illnesses if their needs are not met.

Proper housing is important. Owners should bring in their ferrets with their housing. They will fare much better in the housing that they are accustomed to. Caging with a solid floor is best. Avoid using any caging made from galvanized metal, as its dust particles contain zinc, which is toxic to ferrets.

Ferrets can be messy, but they like clean cages, so cages should be cleaned two times a day. Bedding should consist of fleece or cotton, or a small pet bed. Do not use towels or fabric with loops, as their toenails will get caught. A hammock (using fleece or cotton) can provide a warm, comfortable bed, hiding spot, and comfort.

Ferrets are meat eaters, requiring a diet high in meat protein and fats with essential minerals. Ferrets have a short digestive cycle, making it difficult to break down plant proteins such as corn. Ideally, they should only be fed ferret kibble. Treats can be bits of cooked chicken or turkey or poultry baby food. Avoid foods containing dried fruits or vegetables.



Most ferrets can be picked up by sliding one hand under the ferret's chest and gently lifting while supporting the hind end with the other hand. Another easy way to handle the ferret is to carefully scruff the ferret on the back of the neck behind the ears with one hand while placing the other hand under the ferret's bottom and legs for support. It is also easy to cradle the ferret in your arms.

Considerations for Ferrets

- Supply resources include cages at least 18" high x 18" deep x 30" wide; a litter box, food bowl, water bottle, hammock and bedding, and appropriate ferret kibble.
- Litter boxes can be filled with shredded paper. Do not use cedar or pine shavings, as they are toxic if ingested. Clean the litter box twice a day.
- Do not use Lysol or similar chemical solutions containing phenol, as they can be toxic.
- Ferrets are smart and can be very active in their crates. Use water bottles rather than bowls for water to avoid spillage. If bowls must be used, monitor carefully to ensure they haven't knocked over. Keep water fresh.
- Free feeding is better than rationed portions, especially for young ferrets. Check for kibble several times a day.
- Ferrets get bored easily and require exercise several times a day. Ensure that they are in an enclosed room to avoid escape.

Rodents

Small animals like guinea pigs, hamsters, etc. may be brought into your shelter. If you have the expertise and staff to care for them appropriately, and the space and equipment needed to house them, then include them in your planning.

If you don't have this expertise and appropriate gear, partner with local groups or individuals who specialize in each breed and develop cooperative agreements with them to provide needed services or staffing.

Guinea pigs are sociable pets. They are the gentlest of all the pocket pets and love to be petted and handled tenderly. Guinea pigs should be kept in the housing brought by the owner whenever possible. Their cage size should be at least 18 x 24 inches and made of wood or wire with solid flooring.

Guinea pigs can be housed together – females with neutered males – but avoid housing males together, as they can be aggressive. Preferred housing temperatures should be around 70 degrees. Guinea pigs may squeal when picked up. Use two hands – place



one hand under the abdomen and chest and the other under the hind quarters to support the weight.

Guinea pigs can develop scurvy due to vitamin C deficiencies in the diet. This is a common and preventable disease. Signs include drooling, weight and hair loss, and painful joints resulting in a reluctance to move. Treatment of daily doses of Vitamin C can help.

Considerations for Rodents

Dogs, cats, and rabbits may carry Bordetella. Guinea pigs should be housed separately to avoid contracting Bordetella. Like most small animals, they are susceptible to drafts and drastic temperature changes. A warm, draft-free but well-ventilated environment should be provided as well.

Supply resources include:

- Bedding made of recycled paper, straw, or hardwood shaving – do not use cedar or pine shaving.
- Toys such as toilet paper or paper towel rolls – do not give hard wood or metal toys.
- Guinea pig pellets, grass hay (timothy), vitamin C daily, parsley, apples citrus fruit, treats such as green leafy vegetables – NOTE: do NOT use seed and fruit mixes.

Hamsters too should be kept in the housing in which they were rescued, if possible. Otherwise, use appropriate caging with enough room for them to move around, eat and sleep. Keep hamsters in separate housing unless they were already housed together when rescued. If they were not, do not house together, even if they are from the same household. Find a draft-free, quiet location away from barking dogs and other shelter noises.

Hamsters can bite when picked up. Biting is normally from stress or fear. Excessive noise can also bother a hamster. Use a calm and soothing voice and demeanor. When picking up the animal, use two hands. Place one hand under the abdomen and chest and the other hand under the hind quarters to support the animal's weight. Securely hold the animal, but do not apply undue pressure. Basic animal care including feeding, housing, preferred room temperature, bedding, toys, etc. are similar, if not the same, as that for guinea pigs.

Reptiles

Reptiles are unlike any other type of animal you are likely to shelter, and they require specialized knowledge and a unique perspective to care for them well. Even though they are sometimes kept as “pets”, they remain wild animals. Whether the animal is a



100-pound constrictor snake capable of killing an adult human or a 10-gram gecko lizard that may die of stress when picked up by a human, each responds according to its native instincts as a wild animal. These instincts have developed over the millennia that reptiles have lived on the earth.

The most important consideration in sheltering reptiles – should you choose to do so – is to provide a heat source for them. Reptiles are poikilothermic or cold-blooded, which means they are dependent on external sources of heat to maintain their biological functions. Use only appropriate appliances to avoid overheating the reptile or starting a fire – but do position a heat source close enough to the reptile for it to absorb the heat. This cannot be stressed enough as the absolute top concern when trying to provide for the physical health of a reptile.

Body temperature is critical to the daily metabolism of food, the operation of organs, and the survival of the animal, but it is also the primary tool for treating illness or injury. Reptiles cannot create, maintain, or store their body heat. They are 100 percent dependent on their environment to provide this source-of-life 24 hours a day.

Some reptiles also require a semi-aquatic environment to maintain their health and well-being.

Considerations for Reptiles

Without the appropriate amount of heat for the appropriate period each day, reptiles cannot metabolize their food. When they do not metabolize their food, it may harden and cause digestive blockage, or lead to anorexia or dehydration. Any or all of these conditions may cause illness or death.

Without the appropriate heat gradient (range of heat within their environment) they will not be able to thermoregulate (adjust their body temperature throughout the day to heat up or cool down as needed). This can lead to stress, distress, illness, overheating, or death. When a reptile is sick or stressed (which should be assumed when an animal enters a shelter), the first thing that should be done to treat the condition is to raise the overall heat gradient, both day and night, by 10 degrees. In the case of illness or infection, this does for the reptile what having a temperature does for a human being.

In the case of stress, it stimulates the metabolism, appetite, and other bodily functions to help keep the animal alive. When a reptile is not kept warm enough, its metabolism slows down, which can lead to illness, and can eventually shut down, leading to death. This is a natural survival instinct in the wild but can prove to be deadly in captivity.



In addition to the five senses mammals have, reptiles have an additional set of sense organs, called the Jacobson's organs, which are olfactory organs located toward the front of the inside top of the mouth of lizards and snakes. By tongue flicking or touching, reptiles take samples of the air into their Jacobson's organs, which they then use to detect smells, identify the type and location of prey, sources of danger, familiar objects and creatures, changes in its environment, etc. Animals use tongue flicking and touching to explore unfamiliar things in their environment or to reaffirm familiar things such as food, furnishings, and humans.

Some reptiles, such as all snakes and some species of geckos, have no eyelids. For captive care of these animals, it is important to provide appropriate water sources (quantity and delivery method) so the eyes do not get dehydrated, and to provide plenty of visual/privacy screens to minimize stress due to visual stimulation. Also, the eye is covered with thin, transparent skin that should shed as the rest of the animal's body sheds.

Green iguanas and Chinese water dragons have what is commonly referred to as a "third eye," or parietal eye that appears in the middle of the top of the head. While the parietal eye does not see images, it does sense light and heat, which means it plays an essential role in the animal's ability to properly regulate its body temperature. It also aids the animal's defensive mechanism by providing warning information about the possible presence of a predator.

Reptiles do not have the typical facial appendage we conventionally think of as a nose, but they do have two nostrils called nares that serve fundamentally the same purpose. In general, any visible discharge coming from the nares of a reptile is probably a sign of illness and should be evaluated by a veterinarian immediately.

An important exception to this, however, is that herbivorous lizards (e.g., green iguanas) regularly "sneeze" out excess salt. This is normal, necessary, and no cause for alarm. Some reptile tongues are sticky (e.g., green iguanas, chameleons) to aid them in bringing food items into their mouth. This is important in a captive environment as reptiles with sticky tongues may inadvertently ingest foreign objects that can cause blockage, constipation, and death.

Most reptiles do not have vocal cords and therefore cannot make any sounds. However, like always there are exceptions to this rule, such as some geckos can make a loud barking- type sound. In general, any sounds made by reptiles may be interesting but should not be cause for alarm.



All reptiles must shed their skin to grow. This process is formally called ecdysis. Snakes normally shed their skin all in one piece, while most lizards shed in pieces and turtle skin tends to flake off. Some lizards, such as geckos and chameleons, eat their skin (possibly to reclaim potentially lost vitamins and nutrients, or maybe to leave no evidence of their presence to potential predators) but most do not.

When a reptile appears to be having difficulty shedding, it is an important sign of a potential health problem. You should never pull a reptile's shedding skin off, but you can aid the shedding process by increasing all appropriate means of hydration.

Tips for Reptiles

If you decide to shelter reptiles, make sure you have someone on your planning team and operations team who is trained to care for them, and that your veterinary team includes a specialist in exotics and/or reptiles. Local groups or clubs that specialize in reptiles can be a great source of information.

Reptiles may shed *Salmonella* bacteria, which can cause severe diarrhea and even death in people and other animals. It is very important to stress sanitation protocols for anyone handling a reptile – including hand-washing and protective clothing.

Many constrictor snakes are large, though not poisonous. The danger from them is in their ability to squeeze their prey to submission or death. Handlers should be experienced and comfortable with their capabilities and understand how to avoid injury. Large constrictors should never be handled without other people present.

Venomous snakes may be used to guard drug operations and uncovered when law enforcement or emergency responders search structures in which they are kept. Typically, venomous snakes would not be kept in an emergency animal shelter.

Appendix N: Planning for Closing the Shelter

Planning for closing the shelter should begin almost as soon as the shelter is set up. Recognizing that the need for the emergency shelter will wane as the community begins to move from the response to the recovery phase, it's best to begin to think about the “arc” of your operations and consider how and when you will demobilize as part of your initial planning.

Community messages should reflect that this shelter is a temporary resource. As needed, plan to implement “bridge” activities that can assist in returning the animals to their families or placing them in permanent good homes.

The demobilization date will initially be indefinite, but it is necessary to prepare for the closing of the shelter and address related concerns. Among these are:

1. Communication issues:
 - a. How will the closing of the shelter be communicated – to owners, to stakeholders, to the community at large?
 - b. How will the closing be coordinated with other disaster groups (for instance, the Red Cross, if it is managing the human shelter)?
2. Animal-related:
 - a. Continued care of sheltered animals – owned and unclaimed:
 - i. Who owns the animals? Do you have signed relinquishment from those who are unable to be returned to their owners?
 - ii. Has the “hold” period for unclaimed animals expired?
 - iii. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection/health certificates for interstate movement
 - b. Use of an established, well-monitored, and well-managed foster care network for the extended care of owned and unclaimed animals:
 - i. Considerations for extended foster care
 1. Legal ownership: Who owns and is responsible for the animal?
 2. Who makes medical decisions, and who pays?
 3. Determine whether the original owner wants to have the animal returned to it and whether they are physically, emotionally, and financially able to care for it.
 4. What is the agreed-upon time frame for foster care?
 5. Written agreement for foster families agreeing to the relinquishment of animal to original owner and carefully outlining rights and responsibilities of all parties.

- 6. Can you facilitate agreements directly between the owner and the foster caregiver, taking your organization out of any legal responsibility?
 - c. Should you consider an “adopt-a-thon” within the community?
 - d. Relocation of sick and injured animals to appropriate/qualified permanent facilities (shelters, rescue groups, etc.)
 - e. Information management:
 - i. Publicly shared information
 - ii. Keep records of staff and volunteer hours and communicate these to local emergency management officials. If a Major Disaster Declaration under the Stafford Act occurs, the community may be able to count these volunteer hours towards the local contribution to the cost of the response.
 - 1. Detailed written records should be maintained should reimbursement for eligible expenses become available
 - iii. Animal movement tracking/disposition
 - iv. Records retention
 - v. Health certificates for interstate movement of animals
 - f. Disbursement of durable equipment/food/supplies. If it is not something your organization needs, consider donating it within the community for use by disaster survivors or in future disasters
- 3. Volunteer and staff management
 - a. Orderly demobilization based on shelter needs
 - b. Travel and transport issues
 - c. Follow up on injuries or other incidents
 - d. Evaluation and debriefing
 - e. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
 - f. Recognizing all those individuals and organizations that contributed
- 4. Clean-up of the shelter facility:
 - a. Thoroughly remove all vestiges of shelter operation
 - b. Ensure that no damage has been done to the facility by the shelter operations. If damage has occurred, repair or replace as needed.
 - c. Clean the facility to its prior-to-sheltering condition
 - d. Confirm with the facility owner that the clean-up is acceptable
- 5. Conduct after-action meetings and create a written after-action document along with a corrective action plan
- 6. Corrective action strategies for future disasters/emergencies:
 - a. What are the lessons learned in every area of the sheltering operation?
 - b. How can lessons learned be incorporated into the planning for the next disaster response operation?

Appendix O: Working Toward Long-Term Recovery

Disaster recovery typically occurs in phases, with initial efforts dedicated to helping those affected meet immediate needs for housing, food, and water. As homes and businesses are repaired, people return to work and communities continue with clean-up and rebuilding efforts.

The transition into the recovery phase may coincide with the demobilization of human shelters and the reunification of animals with their owners. The objective of the recovery phase is to return a community to normalcy and to incorporate mitigation strategies to reduce or prevent the impact of future disasters.

In the case of pets, recovery strategies should always consider the special needs of pet owners and provide opportunities and tools for pet owners to participate in mitigation strategies and contribute to the recovery effort.

The recovery period may provide an opportunity to conduct a complete and thorough assessment of the community's permanent animal sheltering needs. Available programs and resources to assist in recovery include various state, federal, and local agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (such as volunteer organizations, faith-based and civic organizations).

While Federal Emergency Support Functions help organize the Federal response, FEMA now uses Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) to support recovery. The details of this process are provided in the National Disaster Recovery Framework.

The specific measures taken by the state to support all aspects of a disaster-impacted community, including assistance requested from the federal government and NGOs will be tailored to the community's long-term recovery needs. The scope of the recovery plan will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Identifying the lines of coordination in transitioning from short-term to long-term recovery.
- Creation of an organizational framework that facilitates the effective coordination and use of state, federal, local, and NGO resources in a manner that provides maximum benefit for the disaster area.
- Assessment of long-term recovery needs.
- Identification of roles and functions of local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal agencies and non-governmental agencies.
- Coordination of information and instructions to the public, including allowance for optimum public input.

- Development of a strategy to identify a wide array of post-disaster recovery and hazard mitigation activities.
- Recovery actions specific to animal sheltering include:
 - Rebuilding essential and critical public facilities and services that support animal sheltering, including public infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the disaster emergency.
 - Re-establishing an adequate supply of animal sheltering facilities and management resources to replace those that were severely damaged or destroyed.

Considerations Pertaining to Households with Animals

- The jurisdictional partners that plan and conduct responses for animal sheltering and other missions to support people with animals should also be involved in recovery.
- Working together in recovery will help address unmet needs pertaining to animal owners and their animals.
- The magnitude of a disaster may lead to long-term animal sheltering or alternative animal care solutions because owners continue to be displaced from their homes and there may be limited pet-friendly temporary housing available.
- A percentage of the sheltered animal population may require continued veterinary care and monitoring.
- A percentage of animals present in short-term emergency animal shelters may be un-owned or unclaimed.

Healthy animals may need to be cared for a period of weeks to months. Permanent shelter facilities in an affected area may be full or otherwise unable to provide care to the animals present in a temporary shelter facility. The development of a foster care system in which individuals in private homes provide care for sheltered animals may be beneficial.

The successful operation of a foster care network is dependent on:

- Development of written agreements between the individuals providing foster care and the individual or organization placing the animal in foster care. These agreements should:
 - Ensure that the individual providing foster care will relinquish the animal when requested.
 - Determine who is responsible for any costs incurred while providing foster care (feeding, veterinary care, grooming, etc.).
 - Specifically, state procedures that may be allowed while the animal is in foster care (vaccinations, microchip placement, elective surgeries such as



neutering and dentistry, etc. while also indicating who is financially responsible for the cost of any procedures performed).

- Specify a period for which the animal is expected to be in foster care and the disposition options available if the animal is not claimed within that time.
- Specify a method for the owner to reclaim the animal when able.
- Specify whether visitation between the owner and the fostered animal is permitted and under what circumstances.
- Specify requirements of the foster caregiver in the care of animals being placed in the home, including the process of periodic reporting on the well-being of the animal under their care and any periodic inspections of the foster home.

Generally, a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection or similar document is necessary before an animal can be shipped interstate. Specific requirements regarding the importation of an animal into a state should be determined and complied with before an animal is moved interstate.

Multiple animals owned by one individual should be fostered together whenever possible to minimize stress on the animals and owner, as well as to simplify the reunification process.

Individuals providing foster care should be knowledgeable about the species of animal for which they are providing care.

\Some animals housed in a temporary shelter facility may require continued medical care or may be too ill to transfer to foster care or other shelter situations. Agreements should be developed with local veterinary hospitals or veterinary schools to care for these animals until they can be united with their owners.

Agreements should clearly define who is financially responsible for the care of the animals and who is authorized to make medical decisions regarding the animal if the owner cannot be contacted.



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Appendix P: Resources

- Trusted references list: Animal Mass Care and Sheltering
 - National Mass Care Strategy (managed in partnership by FEMA and the Red Cross): <https://nationalmasscarestrategy.org/>.
- Many resources for general mass care
 - Pet/animal-specific documents: <https://nationalmasscarestrategy.org/nmcs-resource-center/nmcs-household-pets-service-animals-and-assistance-animals/>.
- Animal sheltering references
 - Louisiana State Animal Response Team-LSART Sheltering Manual: <https://lsart.org/sites/site-5439/documents/LSART%20MANUAL%20April%202018.pdf>
- Florida State Agricultural Response Team (<https://flsart.org/>)
 - Disaster Preparedness Guide: <https://flsart.org/resource/DisasterPreparednessGuides/DisasterPreparednessGuides.jsp>
 - Pet Sheltering online training: <https://flsart.org/training/petshelter/>
- Animal sheltering supply lists:
 - National Association of City and County Health Officials: <https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Emergency-Animal-Sheltering-Checklist.pdf>
 - LSART Manual page 49: <https://lsart.org/sites/site-5439/documents/LSART%20MANUAL%20April%202018.pdf>
- National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (<https://www.thenarsc.org/>) - many NARSC member organizations provide animal sheltering training. Click on member organization for links.
- American Humane: <https://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/emergency-training/>
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) – <https://www.asPCA.org/>
 - ASPCA Pro disaster resources: <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource-library?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A3101>
- Code 3 Associates: www.code3associates.org
 - Disaster Training: <https://code3associates.org/animal-disaster-responder-adr/>
- International Fund for Animal Welfare: www.ifaw.org and <https://www.ifaw.org/programs/disaster-response>
- RedRover: <https://redrover.org/>

- Petco Love Lost - pet-owner reunion resources including a national database with facial recognition software support. <https://lost.petcolove.org/>.
- Colorado references:
 - North-Central Region resources (guides, job aids, links): <https://www.ncrcolorado.org/node/474.html>.
 - Colorado State University Cooperative Extension: Community Animal Disaster Planning toolkit and sheltering training resources: <https://extension.colostate.edu/disaster-web-sites/community-animal-disaster-planning-toolkit/>.
- Douglas County:
 - Companion animal sheltering plan template: <https://dcsheriff.net/documents/stand-alone-temporary-shelter-plan.pdf/>
 - Large animal sheltering plan template: <https://dcsheriff.net/documents/temporary-large-animal-shelter.pdf/>
- California references:
 - California Animal Response Emergency System: Animal sheltering resources
 - https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/eprs/cares/animal_shelter.html.
 - University of California Davis: <https://iawti.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/iawti-training/emergency-preparedness>.
 - Butte County/North Valley Animal Disaster Group: <https://www.nvadg.org/>
- Iowa State University Center for Food Security and Public Health:
 - Just-in-time training resources, including Temporary Sheltering For Animals During Animal Health Emergencies: <https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/emergency-response/just-in-time-training/>
- New York: Resource page with many useful links:
 - <https://alert.ny.gov/animal-response-resources>
- North Carolina: Equine transport and sheltering references:
 - <https://www.ncagr.gov/oep/Respond#equine>
- Utah: <https://ag.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Community-Planning-Guidance.pdf>

Additional Resources

- National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP): <https://www.thenasaaep.com/>
 - Best Practices Working Group documents: <https://www.thenasaaep.com/workshp-resources>
- Red Cross - <https://www.redcross.org/> - provides a wide variety of training, including First Aid/CPR/AED and mass care/sheltering training

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): <https://www.fema.gov/>
 - From the main FEMA page, click the “Emergency Management” tab for an overview of FEMA resources for emergency management
- FEMA Emergency Management Institute: Provides both onsite training and virtual training: <https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>
 - Independent Study Course List, which includes general ICS/NIMS training, EOC operations, and many other trainings in a wide variety of subject areas. All IS courses are free.
<https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx?lang=en&all=true>
- National preparedness information and doctrine:
<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness>
- Comprehensive Planning Guide 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf
 - US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/animalhealthguidelines.html>
 - National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO):
- Emergency animal sheltering checklist:
<https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Emergency-Animal-Sheltering-Checklist.pdf>
 - Pet-Friendly Hotel Finder: <https://www.petswelcome.com/>
 - Livestock handling resources and references (just a few, search “safe livestock or horse handling” for many references)
 - Temple Grandin, Basic Animal Handling Recommendations:
<https://www.grandin.com/behaviour/principles/principles.html>
 - Ohio State University: <https://cfaessafety.osu.edu/cfaes-safety-program/livestock-handling-safety> - many links to additional resources
 - Kansas State University: <https://nasdonline.org/7389/v001635/youth-livestock-safety-1-horse-safety-take-good-care-of-yourself.html>



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Appendix Q: Forms, Sample Job Aids, tools, and More

Hurricane Animal Sheltering Setup Timeline Example

(Editor's note: The following is a timeline for a state-driven element of animal sheltering response provided by. Similar actions are needed for locally managed pet sheltering operations, recasting some agency terminology to local partners).

This timeline is given as a guideline. It was developed by the Louisiana State Animal Response Team (LSART). It is meant to be used for planning purposes for an evacuation animal shelter where pre-event evacuation is necessary and appropriate. "H-Hour" is set as the projected onset of naturally occurring, slow-onset disasters such as hurricanes. The National Weather Service uses "landfall," which is the crossing of the leading eye wall from water to land, as the "H-Hour."

The minus sign signals that these activities should be undertaken at least that many hours in advance of the "H-Hour". For instance, "H-120" means the activities should be accomplished at least 120 hours (or 5 days) before the event. Be aware that large storms (like hurricanes) can endanger communities many hours before the "H-Hour", so it is important to build in extra time to be safe. For smaller or fast-onset events, the guidelines can be adapted and used as appropriate.

H-120+

- Pre-position animal crates at regional depots as resources for use by shelters as needed
- Identify pet evacuation shelters co-located with human shelter locations
- Assure supply transportation arrangements are ready
- Establish procedures for animal responder credentialing and intake processing
- Mobilize the leadership team and alert volunteers.

H-96

- Deploy animal sheltering volunteers to facilities to configure load (transport cages and supplies)
- Acquire and deploy supplies from storage areas, transport to identified shelter(s), and assemble pet crates.
- Notify EOC of the need to activate any support operations plan for pet and livestock sheltering
- Activate ESF-17 (or Animal Response Emergency Support Function), ESF-6, state, and NGO assets to accomplish sheltering missions
- Initiate pre-scripted Federal Mission Assignments (MAs) for federal surge capacity staffing (USDA, VMAT, USPHS DVM Team, etc.)

H-72

- Configure cages at shelters
- Prepare shelter(s) with crates and supplies, shelter management teams, veterinary management teams, etc.
- Animal Sheltering Teams report to designated field locations
- Vet Team sets up clinic station at shelters
- USPHS vets arrive to support command
- Open any special needs pet shelters if needed
- Donation management team activates staffing at shelters

H-60

- No new action
- Status reports (every 2 hours) H-54
- Shelter(s) open for registration
- Begin intake and registration at animal shelters of self-evacuees
- Pet trucks move in with evacuee buses to shelter destinations as registration progresses
- Information updates flow to all groups/parties as required
 - Interagency
 - Public messaging/media

Example Animal Sheltering Equipment and Supply List

Companion Animal List: Actual stock may depend on many factors and site-specific needs.

Companion Animal Sheltering Durable Equipment

- Cargo trailer
- 100-150 wire crates (mostly large or extra-large)
- airline crates: small, medium, and most large/extra-large
- Portable generator(s) with fuel
- Portable chain link panels and gates
- Canopies or large tarps (alternate portable tents)
- Portable lighting
- Folding tables and chairs (comfortable chairs preferable)
- Coolers (veterinary supplies, human beverage stock)
- Heat lamps (use with caution)
- Portable heaters (use with caution)
- Wire pens (for litters of puppies)
- Microwave oven (optional)

- Rabbit/rodent cages
- Microchip scanners (universal)
- Portable scale for weighing small pets

Animal Sheltering Durable Supplies

- Stainless steel bowls (various sizes)
- Soft muzzles (various sizes)
- Shower hooks (for hanging clipboards on cages)
- Can opener and spoons
- Mixing bowls (large and small), measuring cups
- Extension cords
- Signage frames and/or pre-printed signage
- Bungy cords (tie-downs)
- Cat litter scoops
- Nail trimmers (canine, feline)
- Grooming tools
- Totes or bins for organizing and storage
- Packing tape, office tape

Animal Sheltering Disposable Supplies

- Disposable paper pet food trays
- Disposable litter trays
- Neck ID bands (large & small) – for example Tyvek bands
- Puppy pads
- Cat litter
- Zip ties
- Gallon-size plastic zip-top bags
- Barrier tape
- Newspaper
- Paper towels
- Cardboard cat carriers (for discharge)
- Cloth towels

Animal Handling Equipment and Supplies

- Heavy gloves
- Cat bags
- Cat grabber
- Control pole
- Muzzles

- Slip lead leashes (do not use clip-on leashes)
- Gauze rolls for applying temporary muzzles
- Throw net

Office Equipment, Supplies, and Forms

- Pens
- Copy paper
- Printer/copier
- Digital camera
- Laptop computer
- Surge protector(s)
- Legal pads/notepads
- Sticky notes
- Permanent markers
- Whiteboard(s)
- Dry erase markers
- Stapler & extra staples
- Small and large paper clips
- Binder clips
- Scissors
- File box w/folders
- Binders with index tabs
- 3-hole punch
- Wrist bands for owner ID
- Clipboards (many)
- Animal Intake forms (triplicate)
- Animal records/care records
- Volunteer Sign-In/Out Roster
- Volunteer Release of Liability
- Cage cards
- Sign materials

Veterinary Supplies

- Exam gloves (SML, XL) latex + nitrile or other latex-free types
- Table for examination, chairs, treatment tent (if no fixed rooms are available)
- Biohazard waste bags
- Sharps disposal containers
- Animal first aid supplies



Cleaning and Biosecurity Supplies

- Large garbage and/or contractor bags
- Large garbage cans
- Buckets
- Spray bottles
- Dish soap
- Household bleach
- Disinfectant (undiluted gallons)
- Broom and dustpan
- Mop, scrub brushes, sponges
- Heavy dishwashing gloves
- Foot baths
- Garden hose(s), sprayers
- Hand sanitizer

Personal Protective and Safety Equipment

- Tyvek coveralls or hooded coveralls
- Cotton coveralls
- Work gloves
- Face shields/goggles
- Rubber boots
- Exam gloves/chemical-resistant gloves
- Dust masks (N-95 or equivalent)
- Traffic cones and safety vests
- Fire extinguisher(s)
- Caution tape
- First aid kit
- Flashlights with backup batteries
- Traffic direction flashlights (red cone)
- Crank or battery-operated weather radio
- Reflective safety vests
- Radios (civilian walkie-talkies) for NGOs (not useable by government agencies)

Tools and Maintenance Materials

- Duct tape (multiple colors)
- Wire for temporary repairs
- Toolbox with typical tools
- Shovel(s), rake(s)
- Snow shovel(s)

- Rope, twine

Just-in-Time Supplies

- Pet food (dry and canned)
- Species-specific feed: rabbits, rodents, various bird species, ferrets, reptiles, etc.
- Kitten and puppy milk replacer (optional if available from off-site)

Animal Feed Protocols

Food preparation area:

- This area must be always kept clean and neat.
- Food should be stored in a sealed container and labeled
- If multiple-brand foods are to be used (for instance if you are using donated foods), try to mix them to alleviate gastrointestinal upset from frequent changes in diet.

Special diet or prescription foods, or foods designated for specific animals, should be clearly labeled and can be kept in this general food prep area or a secure area near the animal's crate. Written feeding instructions for special diets, and identification of the animal to whom they should be fed (including breed, name (if known), and shelter ID), should be attached to the container. Do not leave open bags or open cans of food lying around. This invites rodents and pests. Any food spoiled by infestation should immediately be discarded.

An area should be designated for cleaning food and water bowls (ideally these will be stainless steel). Soak in a diluted bleach solution for 10 minutes, rinse thoroughly and, if possible, allow to air-dry. Cleaned food/water bowls should be stacked neatly by size for easy access. Any bowls used in quarantine or isolation areas should be stored, washed, and disinfected separately to avoid contamination of other animals.

Food and serving supplies:

- Dry food – adult dog/cat, puppy/kitten (stored in labeled closed containers)
- Jugs of clean water
- Canned food
- Plastic tops for partially used cans
- Manual can opener
- Paper food bowls (for cats/kittens)
- Stainless steel bowls (various sizes)
- Latex or non-latex exam gloves
- Garbage bags (tied to supply cart when available)

- Pooper scoopers
- Paper towels and multiple spray bottles with cleaning solution
- Boxes of non-latex gloves
- Squirt bottles of hand disinfectant
- Multiple supply carts (grocery carts are ideal) on which to load supplies to maximize efficiency. Carts should be filled with all needed feeding and cleaning supplies stocked before the feeding operation.

All Animals

Be cautious and aware of animals' body language when feeding.

Adult dogs:

- Expect all dogs in a disaster or emergency to be under stress.
- Please be sensitive and respectful of their space.
- To minimize the stress on the animals, please follow feeding protocols and instructions carefully.
- Unless otherwise instructed, dogs 6 months and older are fed adult dry food twice a day:
 - Once in the morning before morning clean up.
 - Once in the late afternoon before the end-of-day cleanup.
- Check the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and Treatment Sheet to be sure that a special diet is not required. If a special diet is required, follow those directions carefully.
- Notate feeding amount and time on Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and initial.
- Dogs are fed dry food only (easier on their stomachs) unless otherwise noted on their cage card.
- If feeding more than one dog in a cage, provide a second bowl of food to prevent food aggression issues.
- During the first few days of emergency sheltering, dogs will be fed small portions (1/2 cup to 1 cup depending on the size of the dog - unless otherwise noted on their cage card) so as not to upset their systems with drastic food changes.
- The Animal Care Supervisor or Veterinarian will determine when larger portions can be fed, as well as if feeding schedules should change.
- One person prepares the bowl for feeding, while the other person holds or monitors the dog to prevent escape.
- Never scoop fresh food into a bowl on top of old food. Old food should be discarded, and dirty bowls removed for cleaning. A fresh, clean bowl of food should be provided for each dog at each feeding.

- If you have a dog that isn't eating, make a note on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet). If a dog has not eaten for more than one day, make a note on the Cage Card, initial it, and bring it to the attention of your supervisor. A veterinary assessment will be needed.
- Notate any possible medical issues observed (runny nose, goopy eyes, bloody or open wound, bloody stool, diarrhea, lethargy, limping, apparent pain, etc.) on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet), initial it and bring it to the attention of your supervisor. If the situation warrants seek immediate veterinary assistance for the dog.
- Replace the water bowl with a clean bowl and water.
- Take this opportunity to poop scoop cage; remove and replace any soiled or wet bedding.
- Transfer dirty bowls to the dishwashing area.

Note

With severely underweight adult dogs (such as from an animal confiscation incident), feeding may initially take place 3 times a day (in the morning, midday, and end of day).

Small dogs and dogs under 6 months:

- Unless otherwise instructed, dogs under 6 months are fed dry puppy kibble 2 to 3 times a day
 - Once in the morning before morning clean up.
 - Midday.
 - Once in the late afternoon before the end-of-day cleanup.
- Check the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and Treatment Sheet to be sure that a special diet is not required. If a special diet is required, follow those directions carefully. Be sure to note the feeding amount and time on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and initial.
- Follow the same procedures for feeding and notations on the Cage Card as above.

Puppies:

- Feed puppy kibble only 2 to 3 times a day
 - Once in the morning before morning clean up.
 - Midday.
 - Once in the late afternoon before the end-of-day clean up.
- Provide food in a low dish.
- If feeding over 4 puppies – provide food in two dishes – to ensure all pups get access to food.

- Replace water bowls with clean bowls and water. Note: Puppies may be prone to knocking over their water bowls. Crates should be checked several times during the day to ensure they have access to water.
- Follow the same procedures for feeding, monitoring health, and documenting activities on the Cage Card as above.

Cats:

All cats in a disaster or emergency are under stress. Please be sensitive and respectful of their space. What may seem to you to be a feral cat, may only be a very frightened cat. It needs time to accustom itself to its new surroundings and new handlers.

It's best to get to know your cats before opening a cage by observing their body language (be aware of your body language as well). Always approach crated cats quietly, move slowly, and speak softly and calmly.

Adult Cats:

To minimize the stress of the animals in your care, please follow feeding protocols and instructions carefully.

- Cats 6 months and older are fed adult dry food with one spoonful of canned cat food twice a day.
 - Once in the morning at morning clean up.
 - Once in the late afternoon at the end of the day clean up.
- Check the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and Treatment Sheet to be sure that a special diet is not required. If a special diet is required, follow those directions carefully. Be sure to note the feeding amount and time on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and initial.
- The mix of cat food (wet and dry) can be spooned into a low, paper tray ("French fry tray" available at restaurant supply stores, Costco, online). The tray is thrown away when the next feeding is done
- If feeding more than one cat in a cage, provide enough bowls of food to prevent food aggression issues.
- One person prepares the bowl for feeding, while the other person holds or monitors the cat to prevent escape.
- Never scoop fresh food into a bowl on top of old food. Old food should be discarded, and a fresh, clean bowl of food provided for each cat.
- If you have a cat that isn't eating, make a note on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet). If a cat has not eaten for more than one day, make a note on the Cage Card and bring it to the attention of your supervisor. Veterinary attention may be needed.



Notate any possible medical issues observed (runny nose, goopy eyes, bloody or open wound, bloody stool, diarrhea, lethargy, apparent pain, etc.) on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet), initial it, and bring it to the attention of your supervisor. Veterinary assessment and care may be needed. If the situation warrants, seek immediate assistance for the cat or kitten.

- Swap out the water bowl for a new one and rotate the old one to the washing station.
- Take this opportunity to refresh (poop scoop) the litter box. Replace litter and/or box as needed. Also replace soiled towels, blankets, newspapers, or other items in the crate.
- Dispose of used paper food bowls and transfer dirty bowls to the dishwashing area. If laundry facilities are available, transfer washable blankets, towels, etc. to the dirty laundry station.

Kittens:

- Kittens under 6 months are fed kitten kibble with one spoonful of canned kitten food 2-3 times a day
 - Once in the morning before morning clean up.
 - Midday.
 - Once in the late afternoon before the end-of-day clean up.
- Check the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and Treatment Sheet to be sure that a special diet is not required. If a special diet is required, follow those directions carefully. Be sure to note the feeding amount and time on the Cage Card (Daily Care Sheet) and initial.
- If available, use paper trays (see “Cats” above) to hold a mix of wet and dry kitten food.
- When feeding a litter of kittens or if there is more than one kitten in a cage, provide enough trays of food to prevent food aggression issues.
- Check kittens for any signs of illness, including discharge from nose, eyes, or ears; lethargy; coughing or sneezing. Watch for diarrhea or bloody urine or poop. Report any findings to your supervisor for veterinary follow-up.
- Thoroughly clean kitten crate, including replacing bowls, litter pan and litter, bedding, and other items.
- As with cats, a two-person team should handle feeding and cleaning kitten cages.

Standard Sheltering Forms – NARSC

Shelter Animal Intake Form

Incident: _____

Intake Personnel Name: _____ Title: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ am/pm Animal ID # _____

Arrival Status:

- ☐ Rescued ☐ Owner/Agent Drop-off ☐ Owner Requested ☐ ASAR
☐ Found ☐ Relinquished ☐ Deceased

Name	Species	Breed	Color/Markings	Gender	Known ID
				☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Altered ☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Collar ☐ ID Tag ☐ License: _____ ☐ Rabies: _____ ☐ Microchip: _____ ☐ Tattoo: _____

Address and/or location where animal was recovered

Owner(s) Name

Owner(s) Address

() _____ () _____
Phone (home) Phone (cell) Owner(s) email address

Veterinarian's Name () _____
Phone

Emergency Contact

Name _____ Relationship _____ () _____ () _____
Phone Cell phone

_____ The animal owners (agents) acknowledge that the risk of injury, escape or death of the animal during an emergency cannot be eliminated. By signing I do not hold the (insert agency name here) and its representative responsible for injury, escape or death of the animal during an emergency.

_____ The animal owners (agent) acknowledges that the risk of injury, escape or death of the animal during an emergency cannot be eliminated and agree to be responsible for any veterinary care or expenses which may be incurred in the necessary treatment of their animal. It is also requested that the animal owner(s) agent contribute to the daily care of their animal, whenever possible.

Signature _____ Print _____ Date _____

Final Disposition of Animal:

- ☐ Returned to Owner ☐ Hold for Owner ☐ Adopted ☐ Euthanized/Deceased

Transported: ☐ Shelter _____ ☐ Foster Location _____ ☐ Other _____

Animal Seizure Intake Form

Incident: _____

Intake Personnel Name: _____ Title: _____

Date: _____ Case # _____ Animal ID # _____

Animal Transport # _____ Agency or Team: _____

Animal Stats

Name	Species	Breed	Color/Markings	Gender	Known ID
	☐ Dog ☐ Cat ☐ Other _____			☐ Female ☐ Male Altered ☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Collar ☐ ID Tag ☐ License: _____ ☐ Rabies: _____ ☐ Microchip: _____ ☐ Tattoo: _____

Initial Evaluation

Behavior: ☐ Friendly ☐ Shy/Cautious/ Fearful ☐ Aggressive ☐ Biter/Bite Hold

Animal Health Status: ☐ Emergency Medical ☐ Medical Care Advised ☐ Stable ☐ Pregnant ☐ Deceased

Medical Exam: Date: _____ Veterinarian: _____

☐ Examined

☐ Treatment Sheet Filed

Final Evaluation

Disposition: ☐ Returned to owner ☐ Deceased ☐ Euthanized

☐ Adopted

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ () _____

☐ Transferred

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Phone: () _____ () _____

Final Behavioral Evaluation

Behavior: ☐ Friendly ☐ Shy/Cautious/ Fearful ☐ Aggressive ☐ Biter/Bite Hold

Exit Personnel/Evaluator Name: _____ Title: _____

Animal Status Change Form

Incident: _____

Case# _____ Animal ID # _____

On-Going Evaluation: Date: _____ Evaluator: _____ Title: _____

Animal Status: ☐ Friendly ☐ Shy/Cautious/Fearful ☐ Aggressive ☐ Biter/Bite Hold	
Animal Health Status: ☐ Emergency Medical ☐ Medical Care ☐ Stable ☐ Pregnant ☐ Deceased	
Medical Exam: Date: _____	Veterinarian: _____
☐ Examined ☐ Treatment sheet attached	
Treatment: ☐ Treated on site ☐ Competed ☐ Transported to: _____	
Pregnancy: ☐ Gave Birth # Whelped _____	Transported: ☐ Shelter _____
☐ Terminated	☐ Foster _____

Emergency Animal Shelter Onsite Checklists

This is a checklist for planning and setup up emergency animal sheltering sites.

- Contacts or key services needed in an emergency response (attach as appropriate to Site Plan)
- Incident Command Post (may change with each incident)
- Local Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Building owner
- Security
- Fire Department
- Police or Sheriff Hospital Ambulance
- Insurance Company for the lead organization
- Legal advisor for the lead organization
- Appliance repair
- HVAC services
- Laundry services
- Freezer
- Washer/dryer
- Electrician Plumber Carpenter
- Exterminator/pest control
- Fumigation Service
- Locksmith
- Utility Companies (electric, gas, landline telephone, cellular telephone, water)
- Janitorial Service
- Waste disposal
- Transportation
- Warehouse/resource management
- Glass Company
- Other

Site features identification (list locations and attach site plans with locations labeled)

- Keys
- Main Utilities
 - Main electrical cut-off switch/meter
 - Electrical breaker boxes, exterior electrical outlets
 - Main water shut-off valve
 - Main gas shut-off
 - Exterior sprinkler system
- Climate control/heating, ventilation, air conditioning system
- Fire extinguishers

- Fire alarms
- Fire suppression system (sprinklers)
- Smoke or carbon monoxide detectors
- First aid kit
- Secure storage areas (locking offices/storerooms, locking cabinets, etc.)
- Video surveillance systems
- All exits and emergency exits
- Ladders

Hazardous areas/materials identification

- Gasoline or flammable fuels
- Cleaning, disinfection, sanitation chemicals
- Pesticides
- Areas with lots of combustibles (cardboard, paper, etc.)

Identify sources of additional equipment needed in some incidents

- Wet vacuums
- Sandbags
- Dehumidifiers
- Large fans
- Generators
 - General (lights, tools)
 - Inverter (sensitive electronics)
- Sump pumps
- Refrigeration units/trailers
- Portable lighting
- Truck/trailer mounted HVAC systems (designed for event tents or temporary use)
- Portable toilets
- Portable hand-washing stations

Daily Upkeep Checklist

The following should be checked during opening and closing procedures and included in overnight security patrols.

- Keys are secure and accounted for
- Safes/locked cupboards are secured
- Doors/gates that are supposed to be locked are locked
- Evidence of tampering with locks or access points
- Evidence of tampering with major utilities
- Anyone hiding in the building

- Fence parameters checked
- Doorbells, buzzers, and intercom are working
- Lights are working (including emergency lighting)
- Surveillance equipment is operating
- Alarms are armed or disarmed as required
- Equipment is operating properly
 - HVAC
 - Water tanks
 - Pumps
 - Special equipment
- Unusual or off-hours activity
- Construction/renovation areas
- Unusual smells or sounds
- Evidence of water leakage (walls, ceilings, floors)
- Refrigerators and freezers are plugged in and operating
- Small appliances are unplugged when not in use
- Sinks and toilets are in working order

Weekly Upkeep Checklist

- Emergency numbers are posted near every telephone
- Fire extinguishers are updated and operable
- Smoke and/or heat detectors are operable
- Sprinkler system is operable
- Water detectors are operable
- Halon or other fire suppression system is operable
- Fire alarms are operable
- Internal detection devices are in working order
- Internal alarms are in working order
- External alarms are in working order
- Backup systems have been tested (emergency lights, power, alarm panels)
- Incident reports have been reviewed
- All keys are accounted for
- Flashlights are operable
- Portable/weather radio is operable

Other Emergency Issues

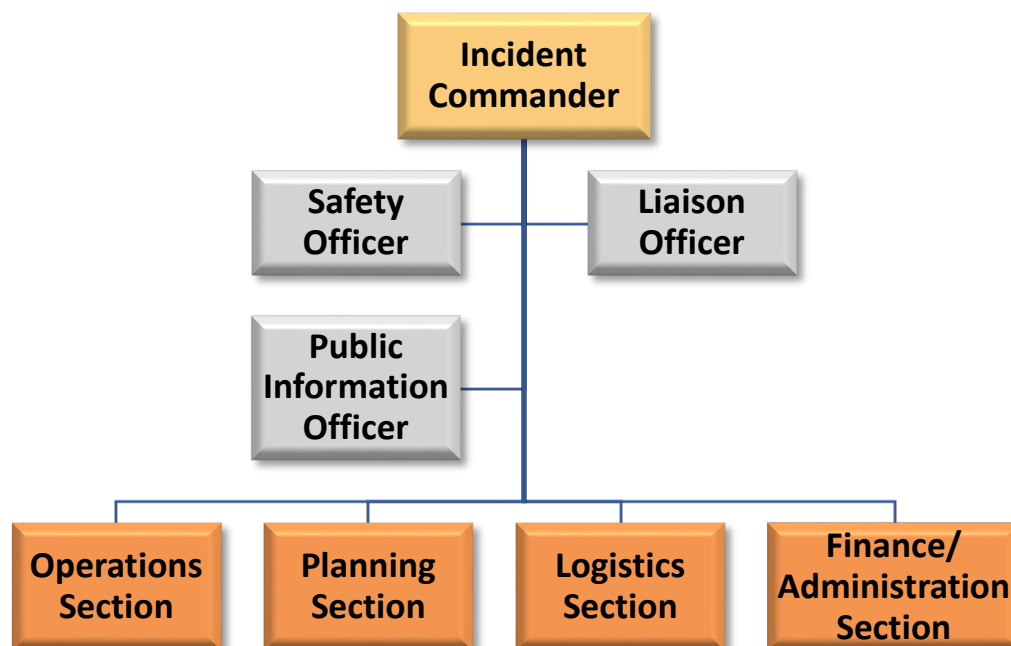
- Date of last inspection by local fire department

Animal Sheltering Roles by ICS Position

ICS-based management can be used effectively to manage emergency animal sheltering operations. It must be clear to all, however, that the ICS for the animal shelter is not independent but works within the broader jurisdictional ICS organization managing the overall incident. At times, Animal Sheltering may also fall under the oversight of the jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center.

ICS position terminology is used, but some jurisdictions may prefer that position terminology not be the same as the jurisdictional Incident Management Team. The Animal Shelter Manager should not be called the Incident Commander. Other positions can have the designation “Technical Specialist” added to differentiate the position from the overall ICS positions.

ICS is flexible and scalable. Only those positions needed should be activated and the Animal Shelter Manager remains responsible for positions not activated.



Animal Shelter Manager

The Animal Shelter Manager oversees the entire operation and reports to a specified person/position in the jurisdictional command structure, such as an Animal Response Group Supervisor. The ASM fills the ICS positions needed, approves the Incident Action Plan (which may be written or verbal), and ensures continuity of the supervisory



structure within the animal shelter operation (each person has one supervisor, and everyone knows to whom they report).

If any position is not filled, the ASM retains responsibilities for that position. More information on basic ICS can be found at: <https://www.ready.gov/incident-management/>

Safety Officer or Safety Technical Specialist

- Provides an initial hazard assessment and daily safety “walk-throughs” assessments.
- Develops a written safety plan and messages. The overall incident Safety Officer may also produce a safety plan and messages that should be adopted by the emergency animal sheltering team.
- Each shift briefing should include a safety briefing. A written safety briefing should be made available to owners as they check their animals in the shelter. Safety messages may also be posted in prominent locations for staff, volunteers, and owners. Safety briefings and messages should also contain security and biosecurity information/messages.

All supervisors with the emergency animal shelter are responsible for ensuring compliance with safety protocols by their teams/units. All team members are responsible for monitoring the safety of animals and owners. Insufficient safety monitoring can lead to injury, and illness and could create organizational liability.

Injuries or illnesses should be reported to the direct supervisor as soon as possible and reported to the jurisdiction as appropriate. If injury or illness is serious, emergency medical services may need to be notified to assist via 911 or through transportation to a medical facility.

If supervisors or the safety officer observe unsafe practices or conditions, they are responsible to stop work safely and help identify a resolution to allow continuance safely.

Public Information Officer (PIO) or Public Information Technical Specialist (TSP)

Emergency animal sheltering teams will generally rely on lead animal organization/agency or Incident Command Public Information Officers to professionally address media inquiries/requests and to push information to the public.

The ASM should be the point of contact with the jurisdictional PIO unless they need to fill the position of PIO TSP. This TSP must coordinate closely with the appropriate organization or jurisdictional PIO.



The ASM or PIO TSP should escort any planned media visits to the emergency animal shelter. Unescorted, unplanned media visits should not be allowed. If an interview is requested, generally a PIO or the Shelter Manager will provide that service. Planned message points are useful in conducting media interviews. Staff and volunteers should NOT provide unplanned media interviews. Erroneous information from such contacts could confuse the public and create mixed messages.

Resource or donation requests by the emergency animal shelter should be coordinated with the jurisdictional Incident Command or Emergency Operations Center Logistics personnel and PIOs. The reason for doing this is:

- Needed resources may already be available through existing donations or inventory.
- The incident needs to know what shortfalls exist across the incident.
- The ICP or EOC may already be aware of the need and is working on gathering those resources.
- Public donation requests need to be carefully worded to allow the public to donate appropriately and not create an inflow of unneeded or unusable items to manage.

Public Messaging

The emergency animal sheltering team should work with partner organizations and emergency management public information experts to develop pre-incident messaging. Such messaging may include:

- Preparedness messaging on evacuation, sheltering-in-place, the planned location (or locations) for emergency animal sheltering, what species can be accommodated, what to bring with your animals, whether the sheltering be animal only, colocated, or cohabitated, who to call if you need help evacuating, and other critical preparedness messages. Identifying organizations or groups to target with messaging is also essential for pets, service animals, and backyard livestock.

Liaison Officer or Liaison Technical Specialist

The shelter manager may choose to appoint a Liaison Officer/TSP to serve as a point of contact for multiple supporting partners (e.g., animal control, the veterinary community, equestrian organizations, animal rescue groups, voluntary organizations, volunteer centers, feed stores, and other donating partners).

The purpose of the Liaison is to provide a point of contact for all partner organizations and help the emergency animal sheltering team manage partnerships and communication throughout the incident.

Planning Section Chief or Planning Technical Specialist

The Planning Section is the essential to a smooth-running organization, including:

- Developing a verbal or written Incident Action Plan and updating the plan each operational period. More information on the planning cycle can be found in the Incident Command and Coordination Best Practices document.
- Check-in/out: Planning is responsible for checking in and checking out responders from the emergency livestock shelter. Vehicles and equipment should be documented daily each day as well (tractor, forklift, trailers, trucks, etc.). Generally, one person needs to be dedicated to the process of check-in/out and tracking responders.
- Maintaining the current organizational chart

Reporting

The Planning Section is responsible for compiling (generally daily) a situational report to provide to the Incident Command and/or Emergency Operations Center on mission status. Situational reports could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Numbers of animals sheltered by species, ideally with a notation of overall capacity.
- Increase or decrease from the previous report
- Key challenges or successes
- Any information on public messaging, rumors, or stories impacting the mission.
- Resource needs
- Demobilization information (if the mission is winding down)
- Maintaining original staff/volunteer check-in/out forms
- Maintaining responder contact information
- Maintaining animal check-in/out information and care histories
- Maintaining incident action plans and other mission documentation, including reports on injury, illness, animal death, animal escape, criminal incidents, etc.
- Maintaining copies of all resource requests and copies of key incident communications

Archiving such records according to jurisdictional and organization protocols. Incident response records may be considered part of governmental records and record retention and archiving information should be discussed with lead jurisdictional agency contact.

Emergency animal sheltering may be an eligible expense for FEMA Public Assistance cost-share grants, depending on the type of declaration in place, making documentation essential for such grants.



As the mission decreases with animals being reunited with owners, the animal sheltering team will be scaled back and finally demobilized. Some organizations may wish to provide performance reviews to staff and volunteers via ICS form 225, available on the FEMA ICS forms website.

Complete demobilization requires:

- Gathering and archiving incident documentation
- Removal of all shelter team equipment and supplies
- Providing restoration of the facility as agreed upon in the use agreement.

Operations Section Chief or Operations Technical Specialist

The Operations Section staffs and supervises the tactical work/services of the emergency animal shelter. Shifts and teams should be created to match the incident needs.

The staffing of the Operations Section may vary considerably depending on the format of the emergency animal shelter:

- *Animal-Only*: The largest staffing needs
- *Collocated*: Much lighter staffing
- *Cohabitated*: Minimal staffing for animal sheltering

Operational teams/areas may include:

- Traffic and parking control
- Intake and triage
- Veterinary
- Kennel/barn teams to conduct animal care and/or owner support
- Discharge/reunification teams
- Security
- Animal records teams

The Operations Section should provide the Planning Section with a report of personnel onsite and personnel/material needs. If utilizing ICS meetings, then the Operations Section is key to the Planning Meeting and Tactics Meeting.

The Operations Section should provide a daily briefing to all animal sheltering team members at the beginning of each shift. Briefings should always include safety messages.

Logistics Section Chief or Logistics Technical Specialist

The Logistics TSP within the animal sheltering team may need to coordinate with the Incident Management Team Logistics Section and/or local EOC Logistics Section on:

- Coordinating with the overall medical plans and communications plans for the incident
- Unmet needs for equipment, supplies, and personnel
- Facility issues (utilities, damage, repairs, lease/use policies, etc.)
- Donations management

Setup:

- Logistics should be critically involved in setup, including acquiring perishable commodities (supplies, feed, forage, etc.) for beginning operations.

Communications plan:

- Creating a cell phone directory
- Setting up and maintaining internet access and power systems for IT electronics
- If radios are used, assign use rules and frequencies.
- Note: While non-governmental organizations can use citizen radio bands, government agencies are not allowed to use these frequencies. If citizen band “walkie-talkie” radios are used, use parameters and channels used should be clear.

Medical plan:

Logistics should coordinate with the Safety Officer to develop a written medical plan that provides responders with information on obtaining and reporting human illness or accidents that require medical services:

- Local emergency numbers
- Location of nearby urgent care facilities
- Location of full-service emergency room facilities
- Injury/illness reporting requirements.

Resource acquisition within the incident:

Receive information on resource needs from Operations and other team members.

Acquire resources through:

- Direct purchase
- Pre-identified donors with specific available items
- Partner organizations
- Request to the jurisdictional ICS Operations or Logistics Section for resources (or EOC if overseeing the sheltering operations)
- PIO-coordinated requests to the public/media for specific donations



Feed and supply storage:

- Prepare a safe storage area for pet food, hay, and other feed (weather resistant, fire mitigation, rodent/pest control)
- Arrange for forklifts/tractors for food/hay/supply receiving and movement
- Maintain inventory and distribution records/controls.

Facility restoration:

- Removal of team equipment and supplies
- Thorough cleaning and disinfection of areas of the facility used for sheltering and support services.
- Removal of all manure, waste, and trash
- Repair of any damage or arrangement to repair later.
- Walkthrough with facility operator for final inspection and release.

Repair and replenishment:

- Inspection, cleaning, disinfection, repair, or replacement of all team equipment
- Inspection and inventory of all supplies, including cleaning, disinfection, repacking, and disposal of unusable items.
- Donation or return-to-vendor for perishable items that cannot be held for later use.

Finance and Administration:

Cost tracking: Cost-tracking is essential to potential FEMA cost-sharing grants, future planning, partner recognition, interagency cost-sharing, and donor cultivation.

Jurisdictional emergency management can guide cost tracking if federal declarations are in place.

- Staff and volunteer time and calculation of staff overtime costs
- Purchases, facility lease, repair costs
- Vehicle and equipment rental or value of time used.

Tracking in-kind contributions:

- Volunteer hours, partner staff time
- Facilities, vehicles, equipment, trailers, etc.

Any situations which could result in claims should be carefully documented. The overall incident Finance and Administration Section, Claims Unit should be informed of any claims/potential claims. The animal sheltering lead partner, lead animal response agency, and others may also need to be informed. Examples of potential claims include, but are not limited to:

- Damage to the facility used for emergency animal sheltering.

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- Injury or illness among staff, volunteers, or the public that are linked to the emergency animal shelter
 - Death, escape, or injury to animals
 - Criminal actions that occur at the location of the emergency animal shelter
 - Prohibited/discriminatory practices that occur at the emergency animal shelter, including discrimination, sexual harassment, or other inappropriate behaviors.

Additional references:

- Large animal sheltering plan template: <https://dcsheriff.net/documents/temporary-large-animal-shelter.pdf/>.
- North Carolina: Equine transport and sheltering references: <https://www.ncagr.gov/oep/Respond#equine>.

Using ICS to Manage Emergency Animal Shelters

Suggested Space and Housing Guidelines for Fully Mature Farm Animals

Animal	Horse	Beef Cow	Dairy Cow	Dairy Goat	Pig	Sheep	Hen	Turkey
Unit	1 horse	1 cow	1 cow	1 goat	1 pig	1 sheep	1 hen	1 turkey
Enclosed Housing Area/ Animal	Box stall 12' x 8' or 10' x 10'	75-100 ft ²	75-100 ft ²	20-25 ft ²	48 ft ² with exercise yard; 100 ft ² without exercise yard	20-25 ft ²	3-4 ft ²	6 ft ²
Exercise Yard Area/ Animal	200 ft ²	100-125 ft ²	100-125 sq ft	50 ft ²	200 ft ²	50 ft ²	10 ft ²	20 ft ²
Pasture Area/ Animal	1-2 acres	1-2 acres	1-2 acres	0.2-0.3 acres	12-14 sows/ acre/ rotational pasture	0.2-0.3 acres	-----	100 ft ²
Type of Housing and Boundary Setback	Enclosed ventilated barn or open 3-sided barn. Setback 50 ft	Open front 3-sided barn. Set-back 50 ft	Open front 3-sided barn, free-stall or enclosed stanchion barn Set-back 50 ft.	Enclosed barn with removable side panels or windows. Setback 50 ft	Enclosed barn, huts, shed, hutches or lean-to. Setback 50 ft	Open front 3-sided shed. Set-back 50 ft	Enclosed barn. Set-back 50 ft	Enclosed barn. Setback 50 ft
Fencing	Electric Wooden rail Woven wire	Barbed wire Electric Woven wire	Barbed wire Electric Woven wire	Electric Woven wire	Electric Plank rail	Electric Woven wire	Chicken wire	Chicken wire

Other livestock housing considerations

Various facilities used for an emergency livestock facility may vary considerably, from state-of-the-art fairground barns to very basic outdoor pens on soil, road base, or gravel. Sheltering teams should work with facility managers ahead of time to address how best to use the facility, any needed modifications, and restoration expectations.



All livestock enclosures should be free of sharp edges, free of gaps in which feet or legs could be trapped, and suitable for cleaning and disinfection as much as possible.

Environmental considerations should be assessed. Ideally, livestock should be housed either outside with available shade/cover/shelter or inside ideally at temperatures between 45- and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Current weather conditions may provide challenges. For example, outdoor temperatures at 95 degrees with over 90% humidity will present challenges.

The use of large fans or facilities with climate control may help improve environmental conditions. Running fans all night may also help remove stored heat within the building structure. In cold winter weather, some animals may be fine in unheated buildings if already acclimated to the cold.

Some animals, particularly smaller animals, however, may need additional mitigation, such as heated areas, blankets, etc. Use of open flame heaters (“salamanders” or kerosene heaters) must be done with EXTREME caution due to the presence of many flammable materials and the generation of carbon dioxide and/or carbon monoxide.

Care schedules and recommendations:

- All types of livestock sheltering
 - All cages, pens, or stalls should have an animal daily care card/sheet affixed in a prominent location. Cards should identify the animal(s), basic descriptions, owner name, and emergency contact information for the owner. Special care instructions or cautionary warnings should be readily visible.
 - Care cards/sheets should allow notation of the performance of daily care activities, including feeding, providing fresh water, cleaning
 - Care cards/sheets should provide room for notation of observations, recording treatments, or other animal-specific care.
- All care providers (sheltering team members, owners, and veterinary professionals), should update the cards/sheets promptly

Feed and feeding:

Bagged feed (grain, pellets, etc.) should be stored in a closed room or stall to prevent an animal from accidentally accessing the feed and overconsuming such. Rodent traps may be needed to avoid contamination of such feed. Hay bales should be stored in a covered location or covered with tarps.

Placing pallets under hay will help avoid water damage. Moldy hay should not be fed. In some cases, a suitable tractor with a hay fork may be needed to manage large bales of



hay. Tractor operators must be experienced and familiar with the equipment. Large amounts of hay should not be stored inside animal barns as these represent a severe fire hazard.

Livestock sheltering teams should acquire good quality grass hay for the base roughage component of feeding. While hay donations are commendable, all donations should be of good quality and the right type of forage.

Some animals may be on special diets and, when possible, owners should provide such specialized feed products and instructions. For example, a geriatric horse with poor teeth may be on a water-soaked pellet diet.

Alfalfa hay, particularly a very leafy product, should be used with caution. Horses, cattle, goats, sheep, and llamas unaccustomed to large amounts of alfalfa can become seriously ill or even die from excessive amounts.

Grain is not necessary for most horses who are not working. If owners provide such products, they should be stored in secure, lidded containers to prevent an animal from getting into such containers. Beyond basic forage, owners should be responsible for feeding additional feed unless specific arrangements are made with the sheltering team.

Exercise:

Horses, donkeys, or mules (equids) housed in stalls without runs should be exercised at least once daily. At least 20 minutes daily of walking-type exercise is recommended, optimally in twice-daily segments, if resources allow. Exercise should be marked on the record sheet. Excessive walking is not desirable.

Enthusiastic volunteers should not be allowed to exhaust animals. Health conditions, such as arthritis, may preclude exercise. Turn-out pens might be an alternative but present a biosecurity risk. Electric horse walking wheels should not be used on horses not used to such devices.

For horses, lack of exercise may result in “stocking up” or edema (swelling) in the lower legs. Simple edema can be corrected with adequate exercise.

Grooming and foot care:

Periodic removal of mud and manure from feet as needed. Grooming is not essential under normal conditions (typically this is provided by owners), but if provided, do not share grooming implements among equids or other animals of different households without cleaning and disinfection.



Medications:

Owners should provide medications and instructions to shelter staff. Some medications may need to be stored in a secure area by staff.

Stall/pen cleaning and waste disposal:

At least once daily, all stalls should be cleaned (manure removed, soiled bedding removed, and bedding replenished as needed). A written cleaning and disposal procedure should be posted, and staff/owners briefed on the procedure.

The facility should be consulted pertaining to waste disposal and a disposal plan should minimize odor and help control flies and other pests.

Daily rounds:

The shelter operations supervisor and veterinary personnel may choose to conduct a joint daily walk-through of the emergency livestock shelter. Such rounds can assist in identifying challenges or concerns with record keeping, animal health, cleaning and disinfection, owner compliance with care expectations, facility conditions, environmental conditions, etc.

Owner-provided care: In collocated and cohabitated sheltering models, owners should provide most, if not all, of the animal care. Even in animal-only emergency livestock sheltering locations, owners may be able to come in to help take care of their horses.

Such care includes feeding, cleaning, exercise, and any necessary medications or treatments. Staff and volunteers may be asked to assist an owner on occasion due to the owner's medical challenges or disabilities, work schedules, or other challenges. Owners should be proactive in working with shelter staff and volunteers on these issues.

In collocated shelters, owners should be expected to sign in and sign out of animal areas. If owners authorize an agent (such as a friend who also has animals at the shelter) to provide care, they should be required to notify shelter management.

Unexplained/unscheduled owner failures to provide care should be discussed with the owner and communication and conscientiousness should be emphasized. Repeated failure of the owner to provide expected care without pre-arrangement may necessitate asking the owner to make other arrangements.



Owners/agents should receive written care expectations and schedules. Such schedules should be posted in multiple locations. Owners must complete entries on animal cage/pen/stall records at the time of the care.

Staff-provided care:

Staff or volunteers may need to provide care in animal-only emergency livestock shelters, performing all work mentioned above, necessitating increased staffing levels.