

## Immediate Response Flowsheet

Legal and medical protection is provided to State Disaster Service Workers only if the team has been activated by the local Emergency Services representative. It is important, therefore, that the team not be self-activating.

1. Following team activation, the Veterinary Coordinator will go to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to get the mission. If the primary Veterinary Coordinator is unable to go to EOC, the alternate coordinator will report.

The VC will then go to the designated Command Post to brief the team on the mission (open phone line, probably coordinator's hospital or home). Prearrange members of disaster team to automatically meet at command post if unable to contact by phone.

Veterinary clinics should check in by calling the local phone number and an out of state contact phone number which is determined in advance. The out of state number will allow individuals to report their availability when local lines have been shut down but the system is still intact. These phone numbers are only used for reporting whether or not the clinic can receive patients. If clinics cannot get through, they should report their status via ham radio or to the local police department.

2. After assessing the extent of the disaster, a temporary shelter site should be set up in the least affected area. This may require moving the command post and setting up alternate communications system. Alternate Veterinary Coordinators should be advised of the shelter site (by phone, ham radio, or a note posted at a predetermined location).

The VC will survey the temporary shelter site to record any preexisting damage to the property. They will complete the site evaluation form, sign it, and have the site owner/manager sign it to confirm the preexisting damage (see page 78).

The Veterinary Coordinator and the core volunteer team can then work together to set up the shelter site.

3. The planning team will then develop an action plan and set an operational period, for example:
  - a. Map the extent of area affected.
  - b. Determine the number of veterinary hospitals needed for treatment and housing. Check the veterinarian call-in number and the veterinarian out of state call-in number to determine who has checked in to help with the disaster. Provide the estimated need and list of available volunteers/clinics to the volunteer coordinators.
  - c. Assess transportation needs and communicate them to the transportation committee.
  - d. Identify liaison (e.g., veterinary coordinator or assistant veterinary coordinator) to communicate resources and needs of the team during the disaster to the resource coordinator for the disaster (Incident Commander) should the disaster become large scale.
  - e. Contact American Red Cross and locate Red Cross shelters. Coordinate transportation from Red Cross shelters to veterinary hospitals.
4. The communications committee should be working to develop alternate communications if phone lines not operating. They will activate the telephone chain of priority resources if phone line or fax is intact. Fax lines and cellular phones do not operate on public switch lines and are therefore more likely to be open during a disaster.
5. The supply committee should be notified that supplies you have in storage need to be delivered to the shelter site. If the disaster is severe, the committee should begin contacting pharmaceutical companies to insure adequate amounts of medications are available. There is a list of medications in this note-

book for review and editing on page 72.

If your response kit is being cycled into use at another location, it must be picked up and delivered to the shelter site.

6. Designate Veterinary Response Historians to record the disaster. A journal should be started immediately and previously identified photographers/videographers should be recruited to visually record veterinary efforts during the disaster.
7. Send out trained and certified personnel to assess animal needs during the disaster. Safety first! A good relationship with local agencies (city, county, state) prior to the disaster (especially local fire and police) may facilitate entrance to a closed area. ID Cards do not ensure automatic access to a disaster zone.
8. Formulate a safety plan and always review hazards prior to embarking on disaster assessments. Review with photographers/videographers as well.
9. The volunteer coordinators can begin scheduling veterinarians and volunteers to staff the shelter 24 hours a day, and should make up reasonable shift schedules for all volunteers and members of the veterinary disaster team. Refer staff to appropriate counseling if stress and fatigue are severe. Remember to brief all your volunteers as they are assigned tasks (operations, logistics, planning, financial).
10. Contact the local American Humane Association as they often are already coordinated with the Red Cross shelters for animal pick-up.
11. Work with the phone company to open a dedicated pet hotline number which can be communicated this to CVMA spokesperson, American Red Cross, and appropriate media resources for lost pets during and after a disaster.
12. Make it clear to all volunteers that the Public Information Officer is the *only* person that will give information to the media. Have them contact CVMA spokesperson in your area to send out media announcements.
13. Reevaluate and adjust your goals and operational periods regularly.
14. Determine when to demobilize your volunteers. Remember to express your gratitude to them.

# Guidelines for Volunteer Animal Care Personnel

## In General

- This is a completely volunteer program. There is no team reimbursement fund available for fuel, damages, injuries, etc. Please check, however, whether food, housing and fuel needs are covered under the MOU for this disaster. Volunteers must provide their own medical insurance.
- In order to work at your triage animal shelter, all volunteers must be sworn in as state disaster service workers before assuming any duties. If a volunteer has not been sworn in, please notify the veterinary coordinator. Those transferring pets must also be sworn in as well.
- Do not talk to the news media yourself. *Only* the Public Information Officer speaks to the media. Please refer any reporters to the media liaison. If you are not sure who that is, refer them to the nearest person in charge.
- You must have completed appropriate training and have your ID card with you in order to be allowed on the crew.
- Vehicles, trailers and drivers must all have current insurance.
- Be sure your own animals are safe and cared for before you join the crew, even if you need to bring them with you.

## Protocol

- *Sign in* before reporting to your team; *sign out* before leaving.
- If you are able to donate feed, please bring *only*:
  - grass hay, oat hay, bran, adult formula dog or cat food, potbelly pig adult diet
- Do *not* bring (*for livestock*: alfalfa hay, cubes or pellets; grain of any kind; supplements or additives) (*for pets*: puppy or kitten chow, or adult “performance” diet)
- Do *not* remove an animal from a cage or stall, exercise an animal, or feed an animal until your section leader gives you explicit instructions.

## Safety

- There are no stupid questions. If you are given an assignment and the instructions don’t make sense, ask questions until they do.
- Smoke only in designated areas.
- Report evidence of self-injury or illness to the volunteer coordinator.
- Please be careful. Avoid putting yourself or others in additional danger. You are strongly encouraged to wear back support belts. Ask for assistance in lifting any pet or supply over 20 pounds.
- If you are pregnant, or have significant health problems, let us know and volunteer only for tasks that will be safe for you! At all times use good sense in preventing injury to yourself, other people and the animals in your care.

## Security

- One should not discharge any animals out any of the facilities until sure of the animal’s identification, the identity of the person taking the animal, and the safety of the animal’s destination. This is to prevent theft of animals. It is also necessary to help reduce the numbers of animals returned to inadequate facilities.
- Unfortunately, some dishonest people try to take advantage of disaster situations for their own gain. Please do not be offended if you are asked to allow a vehicle inspection prior to leaving the facility, in order to protect the animals and keep track of donated feed and loaned equipment.

## Facility Management Plan

In addition to using volunteers in the positions described on the following pages, there are a number of positions requiring greater leadership. These roles should be filled by members of the core team, preferably those on committees with related duties.

### **Small Animal Response Coordinator—1 per team**

Responsible for managing volunteers, supplies, identification and communications for small animal responses

### **Large Animal Response Coordinator—1 per team**

Responsible for managing volunteers, supplies, identification and communications for large animal responses

### **Logistics Coordinator—1 per team**

Responsible for coordinating all committees and interfacing with the Small and Large Animal Response Coordinators to ensure they have all the resources and volunteers they need

### **Facility Manager—1 per 8 hour shift, 3 shifts**

Oversees operation of the animal facility and is responsible for two major units:

- Animal Intake and Identification (intake/release and lost animal reporting)
- Animal Housing (care, feed, water, and sanitation)

Briefing the next shift should include updates on:

1. Situation status
2. Objectives and priorities
3. Current organization
4. Resource requested
5. Resource assignments
6. Resources en route
7. Facilities established
8. Communication plan
9. Prognosis, concerns, related issues

### **Animal Intake and Identification Leader—1 per 8 hour shift, 3 shifts**

Makes sure that forms are correct, updated and properly filed, and that volunteers have a clear understanding of procedures.

Assists whenever and wherever possible.

### **Animal Housing Leader—1 per 8 hour shift, 3 shifts**

Sees to all of the following:

- Animals are fed, watered and exercised correctly, and information is logged.
- Housing units are clean.
- All waste materials are disposed of or placed in designated area.
- Inventory of housing units is available.
- Resources (food, bedding, etc.) are ordered in a timely manner.

## Volunteer Positions

Listed below are the other positions that are routinely used to staff temporary shelters. The number of volunteers needed to fill each position is determined by shelter need and volunteer resources. One volunteer may be assigned a variety of positions as disaster response needs vary.

### **Animal Food Preparer**—Reports to Animal Housing Leader

Responsible for feeding and watering the animals on a regular schedule while they are being cared for at the animal disaster relief shelter.

### **Animal Intake/Reclamation Assistants**—Reports to Animal Intake and Identification Leader

Responsible for assisting in the processing of all incoming and reclaimed animals into the animal disaster relief shelter. This person has to like to do paperwork and must be someone who works well under pressure. (S)he is also responsible for ensuring the filing in the Animal Intake Area is kept up to date. If photocopying is available and needed, this position is responsible for completing requested copying.

### **Animal Search and Rescue Worker**—Reports to Volunteer Coordinator

Responsible for assisting in the search and rescue of animals affected by the disaster. Must have experience handling aggressive animals and be familiar with different rescue equipment to include catch poles, grasper poles, traps, nets (throw and pole types), and squeeze cages. Experience with large animals, to include horses and other livestock, required in some disasters. These volunteers are often RVTs or AHTs closely associated with the team.

### **Animal Transportation Worker**—Reports to Volunteer Coordinator or directly to Transportation Committee

Responsible for transporting animals to and from veterinarians, groomers, boarding kennels, animal shelters, or rescue sites.

### **Data Entry Clerk**—Reports to Animal Intake and Identification Leader

Responsible for entering information onto established data bases for purposes of tracking animals during a disaster.

### **Historian**—Reports to Public Information Liaison

Responsible for assisting the Public Information Liaison in keeping a daily log on major events; statistics on the numbers of animals rescued from the field, and arriving and/or departing from the animal disaster relief shelter. This information is supplemented with still photos and video footage taken by the Public Information Liaison and the Historian volunteers.

### **Information Table Assistant**—Reports to Public Information Liaison

Responsible for interacting with the public that arrives at the animal disaster relief shelter. Requires the ability to learn information quickly, deal with the public in a patient manner, the ability to assess situations quickly and provide members of the public with information that is correct and helpful.

### **Kennel Attendant**—Reports to Animal Housing Leader

Responsible for moving animals in and out of cages/runs, as they arrive and depart from the animal disaster relief shelter. Moves animals around the facility as the population fluctuates. Notifies the Animal Housing Leader of any situations they notice involving animals that need special attention, i.e. an aggressive animal, a sick animal, an animal in need of grooming.

**Lost and Found Information Recorder**—Reports to Animal Intake and Identification Leader

Responsible for working with members of the public who have lost an animal during a disaster. Helps these people complete the Lost Animal Form, if necessary. As new animals arrive at the animal disaster relief shelter, the Lost Information Recorder volunteer tries to match animals at the facility with ones that have been reported missing. This position requires being patient and sympathetic with those who have lost an animal.

**Veterinarian** (license required for the state where the disaster has occurred)—Reports to Volunteer Coordinator for assignment to field or shelter duty

Responsible for providing medical care and treatment of animals in the field or at the animal disaster relief shelter that are injured or sick as a result of the disaster. These services are coordinated with local veterinarians, state veterinary associations, and the American Veterinary Medical Association. Must provide a copy of current medical license.

**Veterinary Technician**, both RVTs and AHTs—Reports to Volunteer Coordinator

Responsible for assisting the veterinarians in the medical care and treatment of animals at the animal disaster relief shelter that are injured or sick as a result of the disaster. Written certification of experience required.

## Procedures Guide: Intake, Housing, Feeding, Exercise

**Note:** If an animal is too aggressive or cannot be handled by volunteers, notify the veterinarian in charge who will determine if the animal(s) can be housed in your facility. Animals may be admitted to the county or city animal control.

### Intake

Processing incoming animals is one of the most important things done during a disaster. There are three classifications of animals that arrive during disasters, and they are described below along with the steps for processing them into the shelter:

#### How to Intake A Living Animal

1. Take animal to Animal Intake area.
2. Secure the animal in a cage or on a leash.
3. Scan the animal for a microchip and look for any tattoos. Even if the owner is known, this is done so that the microchip or the tattoo number can be noted on the Animal Intake form.
4. Complete the Animal Intake form. Litters will be assigned to one form and given one number. If litters are with the mother, they will be registered on her form under her number.
5. Complete identification process:

Take two Polaroid pictures of the animal if stray, one if owned. If owned, include the owner in the picture if available.

Write intake date, number and sex of the animal on the white portion of each picture.

Attach (1) picture to the lower right corner of the Animal Intake form. If the animal is a stray, place the other photo in the Stray Animal binder under the category and the sex of animal.

File the Animal Intake form in the appropriate binder. Record intake information on the Intake Log as well.

Fill out the neck band with intake number, date, sex, and breed. Attach it to the animal's neck.

6. If there is a chance the animal might bite, put a Caution–Biter sign on the cage or if it is a quarantined animal put a Caution–Quarantined Animal sign on the cage.
7. Fill out a cage tag and have a shelter volunteer take the animal to the assigned cage or area where it will be housed, unless the animal needs to be seen by a veterinarian, then it would go to the triage area.

#### How to Intake a Dead Animal

1. Take animal to the area designated for disposal of dead animals.
2. Take a picture or pictures of the animal. It is important to take as many pictures as needed so the animal might be positively identified (include distinguishing marks in the pictures); attach the pictures to the lower right hand corner of the Animal Intake form.
3. Scan the animal for a microchip and look for any tattoos.
4. Complete the Animal Intake form and file in the Dead Animal Binder.
5. Place the animal in a bag designated for dead animals.
6. File the Animal Intake form with the pictures attached. Mark the Animal's Intake number, which is on the Animal Intake form in the upper right corner, on the dead animal bag.

## **Strays**

All strays are admitted through the Animal Intake desk. They will receive the maximum standard of care. All uninjured strays will go to the shelter if space is available. This will allow owners looking for lost pets to only have to go to one location. In the event the animal shelter or a designated holding facility cannot accommodate all strays, 1-2 participating veterinary clinics will be designated for strays. These should be clinics with isolation facilities. This will decrease the number of stops a worried pet owner must make to locate their pet.

If possible, set up a digital camera to photograph all strays and download information onto a computer for posting on a website. This will allow worried owners to search all strays from one central location.

With seriously injured pets, consult SPCA/AC as to whether pets will be transferred to a veterinary clinic or shelter. The transportation unit notifies SPCA/AC for transport when the pet is stable. Try to combine transfers so SPCA/AC make as few trips to the shelter site as possible.

## **Lost/Found Pets**

Make sure there are lost and found forms at the preadmission station. Use the forms provided in their binder as a template or use forms from the local animal shelter.

Found sheets are only used for people who are **not** leaving strays at the shelter. Encourage all Good Samaritans to leave the found pets at the shelter. This is their best chance of finding their owners. If a stray is admitted to the shelter, a found form is not needed. In that case, only fill out the admissions form.

Have owners fill out a lost form prior to accessing any animal photographs online or in found books or files. Only show the photos that fit the description on the lost form.

## **Housing**

A complete inventory will be taken and maintained of all supplies/materials on hand needed to operate the facility.

Each housing unit will be pre-numbered with attached duct tape as follows:

Small cages (small animal, bed, food and water dish)	001–099
Medium cages (small animal, cat(s), bed, food, water and litter box)	100–299
Large cages (medium animals, bed, food, water)	300–499
Pens (large animals, bed, food and water)	500–699
Stalls (large animals, bed, food and water)	700–799

Loaner cages will be numbered in sequence following cage numbers. Tags will be attached to the cages with blue ribbon (surveyor's tape) with the owner's name and phone number. Tags should be placed on cages so they are not accessible to the animal. The housing manager will be responsible for returning cages to owners.

A housing tag will be placed on the housing unit. When an animal is housed in the unit, the date in and time out will be noted. The tag will then be placed on the housing control board, and when the unit is cleaned and ready for occupancy, the tag will be placed back on the unit with the date and time cleaned. The tag will be initialed by the volunteer.

When advised, two housing volunteers will respond to animal intake personnel and take the animal to its housing unit (the owner may accompany volunteers). Try to house strays away from owned pets and non-domestic away from domestic if possible. Volunteers who are assigned to housing may be requested to assist in animal intake, depending on the demand.

A care/feeding log will be placed on a clipboard outside the housing unit, and out of the animal's reach. The volunteer will note the animal's housing unit number on the log. The volunteer will also check to be sure all information matches the animal being housed.

Animals will be given a food dish and a water dish filled with water, if approved by the onsite veterinarian. If an animal has not been fed, and it is past the regularly scheduled feeding time for animals in that area, it will be fed. This information will be noted in the housing log.

The housing unit tag will be updated by the housing volunteer. The housing volunteer will then advise intake personnel of the animal's housing unit number, which will be added to the animal intake form.

The animal's chain, leash or lead rope will be hung outside its housing unit (out of reach of the animal).

## **Feeding**

**Special diets:** Alfalfa, Equine Senior, Bran, Puppy Chow, etc. will be treated as prescription diets and will be stored in a medical area with restricted access.

Check the housing log for cautions, special foods, etc. Read the log carefully and be aware of the animal's history. Note the following on the housing log:

What food and how much is being fed.

Has the animal eaten its food? How much?

Clean water and refill. Is the animal drinking its water? How much?

Has the animal defecated in its cage or has defecation been noted on log by the exercise volunteer?

Does stool or urine appear normal?

Does the animal appear mentally and physically OK?

If the answer to any of the above questions is "no," then advise the veterinarian and housing leader personally and enter this information in the housing log.

## **Exercise**

Check the housing log for cautions and history. Animals should not be exercised more than every three hours, and for not more than 15 minutes. Note the following:

Is the animal moving OK?

If the animal is a horse, check its feet. If the animal is lactating, check her teats.

Log whether or not the animal eliminated, and how feces or urine appeared.

Log exercise and amount of time.

Log anything unusual, and advise the veterinarian if there are any questions.

## **Transferring animals from the triage site or holding facility**

Pets must be transferred either by the owner or a registered volunteer with correct identification. Do not release any pet to anyone without identification.

The pet must be wearing our ID collar and must have the white admission form, exam sheet/treatment sheet, and cage card (if pet was admitted) to be admitted to a referral veterinary clinic. Pets must be in carriers or on a leash or harness for transfer. Volunteers transferring animals should not handle any animal or remove them from the carrier. These animals can injure them or escape.

Encourage the owner to transfer their own pet. If the owner cannot transfer the pet, transportation volunteers will do so. After the pet is transferred, the transportation volunteer will staple the yellow admission sheet and yellow treatment sheet together and give to one of the veterinary support staff to update the summary by recording the transfer location, date and time.

### **Releasing animals**

Pets will be released to the owner on presentation of their driver's license or social security or a copy of it. It will be compared to the original admission form and the owner will sign the release portion at the bottom of the admission form. Problems with release can be addressed by the Operations Sections Chief. Should a pet owner fail to contact you within 3 weeks, transfer the pet to SPCA/AC.

### **Triage site**

Remember, this is a **temporary** holding facility. Transferring pets to a designated holding facility or participating referral veterinary clinic is essential for the safety and health of all pets.

All pets will be examined by a triage veterinarian to determine if they are stable to transfer. Animals that are in a life threatening situation (with a reasonable prognosis) will be designated Triage #1 and should be treated first. Triage #1 should be housed closest to the triage area to allow regular reevaluation by the veterinarian on duty. Animals that are injured but not in a life-threatening situation will be designated as Triage #2. Animals that appear uninjured will be designated Triage #3 and should be transferred to holding facilities.

Wildlife should not be triaged because pets are our priority. They can be treated as time permits if requested by the Department of Fish and Game.

Safety of both the pets and the volunteers is the number one priority. Only veterinary staff will handle the animals for treatment and cleaning. For everyone's safety, you must insist that a trained veterinary staff volunteer hold the pet for all examinations and treatment. **Never let an owner restrain their own animal!**

It is also a good safety practice to use muzzles for any treatment of dogs and catbags and muzzles for any treatment of cats. Explain to the owner why the muzzle is necessary for your protection and their pet.

### **Euthanasia**

If the owner is present and an animal needs to be euthanized, the owner must sign a euthanasia form. This should be **immediately** stapled to the admission form to prevent problems or confusion in the disaster aftermath.

If an owner refuses treatment or euthanasia of a critically ill animal, please work to get this approved during your examination with the owner. If the pet is critical and could die, notify SPCA/AC. They will take custody and release the pet for treatment or transfer.

### **Regarding deceased animals**

Contact mental health for counseling if appropriate. Pets that are brought to the shelter deceased should be admitted as any pet. If the owner wants a veterinarian to do an exam to determine the cause of death, they may choose to have the animal submitted for autopsy at the owner's expense.

**If a deceased animal has bitten anyone**, the pet is taken to the triage area and tissues must be submitted for rabies. Keep the tissue sample cool. Before disposing of any deceased pet, check to see if pet has bitten anyone; remember to check the admission sheet, collar, cage card, and treatment sheets.

### **If an animal dies at the shelter**

1. Note on the chart sheet date and time it died. Have the veterinarian write differential diagnosis for the cause of death if possible.
2. Leave ID collar on.
- 3. Confirm it has not bitten anyone by checking for bite notations as above.**
4. Try to notify the owner.
5. Update the yellow admission as to the day and time the pet died. Have a volunteer update the summary by writing deceased under the transfer column and the date and time the pet died. Staple admission sheets, exam sheet/treatment sheet, and cage card together with the yellow admission sheet.

### **Referral veterinarians**

Only disaster related injuries will be treated at no charge. Other (non life-threatening) treatment should be discussed along with charges when the owner contacts the referral vet. If (s)he performs an elective procedure or treats a condition that is not life-threatening without the owner's consent, they may refuse to pay the vet.

It is essential that the referral vet keep a running summary of drug amounts and supplies. While they will not be reimbursed for their time, accurate records increases the chance they will be reimbursed for supplies and medications. After the crisis is over, ask them to make 2 photocopies of all records (including those sent with pet from shelter site). These will be turned over to the city and to the disaster team coordinator.

### **Equine and livestock**

The response for horses and large animal is similar to the small animal response. Animals found loose will be processed the same as stray small animals.