

VIRGINIA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Annex N: Attachment # Model County Response Plan For Animals in Disasters

I. Mission

The mission of this Model County Response Plan is to provide guidelines for animal-related agencies to establish general policies and procedures and organizational responsibilities to ensure coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery efforts of animal welfare organizations and animal control agencies statewide for rapid response to disasters affecting the welfare and safety of animals and the community at large. Animal care and control activities in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery include, but are not limited to, companion animals, livestock and wildlife care, facility usage, displaced companion animal and livestock assistance, owner reunification, and carcass disposal.

II. Assumptions

Recent disasters have reflected the human-animal bond that affects large segments of the human populations and their behavior in disasters.

- A. People with companion animals frequently will choose not to evacuate rather than leave animals behind.
- B. People will try to re-enter an endangered area to retrieve animals left behind, putting themselves as well as emergency personnel at risk.
- C. People will live in their cars or stay on the streets rather than abandon animals in order to stay in evacuation shelters.

Therefore, it is essential that all counties and towns develop policies and procedures for responding to and managing small and mid-sized events that could become disasters.

III. Purpose

The purpose of this Model County Response Plan is to develop criteria to temporarily arrange for or provide care and proper disposition for companion animals, livestock, and wildlife. This will include coordinating with governmental authorities in matters of animal rescue, evacuation, use of equipment, provision of transportation and security of their animal care and control facilities and supplies as well as facilitating a system for companion animal/owner reunification.

IV. Concept of Operation

A. Awareness and Preparedness

1. Develop procedures to inform and educate the public utilizing media resources and presentations in the schools and at civic events.
2. Coordinate, develop and maintain with appropriate agencies a resource network, with lists of veterinary hospitals, kennels and boarding facilities that will participate in sheltering of domestic pets during emergencies and disasters.
3. Coordinate with local Department of Social Services and American Red Cross in identifying animal friendly shelter sites near approved evacuation shelters.
4. Establish rules and regulations in conjunction with participating groups for the emergency care and sheltering of pets.
5. Maintain a current resource list of participating groups with contact persons, telephone numbers and a list of appropriate support agencies.
6. Conduct training sessions and workshops to assist in recruiting and preparing participating groups and individuals in the emergency sheltering of companion animals and livestock.

B. Response

1. Coordinate local emergency response procedures with the statewide support network.
2. Manage and direct evacuation of animals from risk areas and provide technical assistance to prevent animal injury and disease outbreak.
3. Secure supplies, equipment, personnel and technical assistance from support agencies, organizations, and other resources to carry out the response plans associated with animal health emergency management.
4. Provide assistance to established pet shelters.

C. Recovery

1. Continue to augment services to provide for rapid recovery.
2. Restore equipment and supplies to normal state of readiness.
3. Coordinate public information and provide situation reports in a timely manner.
4. Maintain financial records on personnel, supplies and other resources utilized and report to the emergency management agency upon request.
5. Resume normal operations.

V. Emergency Management Actions

A. Normal Operations

1. Develop and maintain plans to provide for adequate care of animals in times of emergencies.
2. Develop procedures to inform and educate the public of the need to be prepared to care for their animals during disasters.
3. Identify essential public and private facilities and develop measures to provide for their utilization in emergency situations.
4. Assign emergency responsibilities and provide training of volunteers.

5. Review and update plans and procedures on a regular basis.
- B. Increased Readiness: a natural or man-made disaster is imminent and threatening the local area:**
1. Alert on-duty personnel
 2. Monitor the situation and be prepared to mobilize if necessary.
 3. Notify volunteers of possibility of impending emergency situation.
 4. Contact resources for temporary emergency housing of companion animals and livestock.
- C. Mobilization: conditions worsen, full-scale preparedness is necessary.**
1. Alert all personnel, assign areas, and responsibilities.
 2. Activate needed resources, including pet food, crates, carriers, cages, bowls, leashes, hay, grain, food and water containers, emergency medical supplies, etc.
 3. Stock shelters with supplies.
 4. Implement evacuation procedures, including safest and most direct route to temporary animal shelters.
- D. Response: disaster strikes. An emergency response is required to provide adequate care of animals during times of emergencies.**
1. Initiate search, rescue and transportation of animals to shelters.
 2. Receive and care for animals.
 3. Identify, control, and, if necessary, destroy animals that pose hazards to the well being and safety of citizens.
 4. Register, tag, and establish accurate records of all animals.
 5. Maintain effective communication with the local Emergency Operations Center, area shelters, and field personnel.
 6. Provide food, water, and waste disposal for animals.
 7. Provide care for sick and/or injured animals
 8. Supervise prevention and control of zoonotic diseases in cooperation with the local health department.
- E. Recovery: the situation has abated and conditions are returning to normal.**
1. Reunite animals with owners, following protocols developed for an orderly reunification process.
 2. Make arrangements for long-term care of animals still unclaimed by homeless owners.
 3. Identify and dispose of dead animals.
 4. Provide documentation of injuries and deaths of animals to the State through the Emergency Operations Center.
 5. Deactivate emergency shelter utilizing appropriate cleaning and disinfecting procedures, returning the site to its original condition.
 6. Report disaster related expenses to the local emergency manager.

VI. Responsibilities

A. Local Emergency Manager

1. Participate in the development of and incorporate an animal care and control annex into the local Emergency Operations Plan.
2. Disseminate animal sheltering and emergency care information to the public prior to, during, and after disasters.
3. Include government and private animal care specialists in disaster planning, training, and exercises.
4. Coordinate animal and mass care sheltering for adults with local animal welfare organizations and/or animal control agencies and the American Red Cross.

B. Animal Control Agencies

1. Manage animal disaster response operations in coordination with Emergency Management.
2. Coordinate activities of the animal rescue teams.
3. Assist with transportation of animals to shelters.
4. Assist in animal rescue operations.
5. Assign a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested by the Emergency Manager.
6. In coordination with local animal welfare organizations develop a training program for animal rescue teams.

C. Animal Welfare Organizations

1. Develop and maintain with local officials a current list of animal care facilities, food supplies, cage suppliers and hotels and motels willing to accept pets.
2. Develop and train volunteers willing to assist in setting up and maintaining an emergency animal shelter to accept animals into their homes for the duration of the disaster and/or to transport them to temporary shelters.
3. Maintain records of where animals are housed and reunite owners with animals if necessary.
4. Supervise the transportation and temporary housing of these animals.
5. Coordinate with the local emergency manager for the release of media notices when it comes to animal issues.
6. Assign a representative to the Emergency Operations Center as requested by the Emergency Manager.
7. Maintain communication between human and animal sheltering facilities and the Emergency Operations Center.
8. Coordinate the need for medical care of animals brought to shelters or rescued during the disaster with local veterinarians.
9. Coordinate the rescue of injured or displaced wildlife with the Virginia Wildlife Center, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries or area Wildlife rehabilitators.
10. In coordination with animal control agencies develop a training and certification program.

D. American Red Cross and other Non-Governmental Disaster Organizations (VA VOAD members)

1. Include animal organizations and animal facilities in local Red Cross plans, training, and exercises.
2. Utilize a resource list of animal control agencies, animal welfare organizations, and/or local veterinarians to provide information or referrals to pet owners.
3. Provide referral information to shelter residents/disaster victims who may need temporary care for their pets while staying in the Red Cross shelter.
4. Provide pet sheltering information at the Red Cross Shelter information information/intake desk.
5. Provide assistance with making food available to animal shelter workers through ongoing mass feeding efforts that are supporting human shelters.
6. Coordinate with animal control agencies and animal welfare organizations in disseminating information to the media regarding the availability and location of emergency animal sheltering.
7. Offer Pet First Aid courses to the community to support preparedness of pet owners to care for their animals in emergencies and to augment training of potential volunteers.

E. Cooperative Extension Agents

1. Develop and disseminate to local farmers information on emergency preparedness for livestock and poultry.
2. Assist animal control agencies and/or animal welfare organizations in the rescue and sheltering of livestock.
3. In coordination with the health department and the United States Department of Agriculture, assist in the isolation, euthanasia and disposal of diseased animals.

F. Health Department and Environmental Quality

1. Provide information and directives to animal control agencies and/or animal welfare organizations when necessary to isolate diseased animals or to dispose of diseased animals.

G. Virginia Department of Transportation

1. Coordinate and provide support for animal-related transport needs, including an inventory of specialized transport equipment needed and available.
2. Provide assistance in the disposal of diseased animals in disaster operation as requested by the State Veterinarian.

VII General Resources

- A. Local animal care facilities, including veterinary clinics, boarding kennels, grooming establishments
- B. Large facilities that might be converted for temporary use for people with animals (fair grounds, exhibit centers, race tracks, private farms, zoos and aquariums, etc.
- C. Local suppliers of pet food and equipment

- D. Local hotels and motels that will accommodate pets
- E. Alternate sites for emergency housing of animals, preferably near evacuation centers
- F. Sources for emergency transport of animals and supplies
- F. Auxiliary communication sources, i.e. amateur radio operators
- G. Auxiliary power supply in case of power failure

VIII. Support Organizations

- A. Veterinarians and veterinary technicians
- B. State and regional veterinary associations
- C. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators
- D. Dog clubs
- E. Cat fanciers' associations
- F. Breed rescue groups
- G. Bird clubs
- H. Horse clubs
- I. 4-H clubs
- J. Young farmers' associations
- K. Colleges, universities, community colleges, technical schools
- L. Corporations and industries
- M. Media – TV, radio, newspapers

IX. Education and Training

- A. The Humane Society of the United States – www.hsus.org
- B. The Federal Emergency Management Agency – www.fema.gov
- C. The American Veterinary Medical Association – www.avma.org
- D. The American Red Cross – www.redcross.org
- E. The American Humane Association – www.americanhumane.org