

Temporary Sheltering: Companion Animal

The temporary sheltering of companion animal species may be needed for a variety of natural disaster situations. A number of factors must be addressed when setting up and operating these shelters.

Need for Shelter

- People evacuating with their pets
- Injured or displaced animals requiring rescue and sheltering until reunited with owners

Assessment and Planning

➤ Location

- Out of the affected area
- Near human shelters
- Possible locations
 - Animal control or humane society shelters, veterinary hospitals, pet boarding facilities, dog training centers
 - Fairgrounds, school gyms, parking garage, warehouses

➤ Facilities requirements

- Water source
- Adequate size
- Ventilation and climate control
- Waste disposal location
- Areas for animal segregation

➤ Supplies

- Animal supplies: food, water, kennels, crates, collars, leashes, bowls, cat litter
- Medical supplies
- Cleaning supplies
- Office supplies

➤ Security

- Limit unauthorized access
- Protect animals on-site
- Prevent pillage of stored supplies
- Manage controlled substances

➤ Volunteer training and coordination

- Animal handling experience
- Pre-exposure rabies vaccination if possible
- Register all volunteers
- Training
 - Incident Command System
 - Animal handling
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Infection control procedures

Animal Arrival

➤ Every animal must have an identification number

- Color-coded temporary identification collar around the animal's neck
- Matching colored band for owner

➤ Every animal must have a record sheet

- Animal identification number
- Complete description of animal – name (if known), sex, color, age, breed, scars, injuries, any identifying characteristics)
- Vaccination history, if known
 - All dogs, cats and ferrets must have a current rabies vaccination
- Date brought into the shelter
- If rescued animal, the location where found

➤ Rescued animals should be photographed

- Place in book for owners to search
- Only the animal's identification number should be displayed with the photo

➤ All animals should be assessed and given a physical exam by a veterinarian

- Scan rescued animals for a microchip
- Treatments as needed:
 - Bathing, first aid, oxygen, internal and external parasites, vaccinations
 - Injuries or illness

➤ Housing

- Each animal should have its own housing large enough for food dishes, standing, lying down; litter box for cats
- Housing areas should be located in area that is easy to clean and disinfect
- Position cages with limited view of other animals to minimize stress
- Segregate animals by species and age

➤ Animal Management

- Dogs must be walked at least twice a day
- Set up designated walking areas with plastic bags for feces pickup and disposal
- Record daily actions on animals record sheet
 - Food, water, walks, medication
- When possible, pet owners should assume the responsibility for the care of their animal

➤ Handling

- Animal behavior can be abnormal in times of stress
- Proper handling can minimize stress and decrease the risk of injury to the volunteer
 - All volunteers should receive training
- Any known, highly aggressive animal should only be handled by experienced personnel. Signage should be placed on the cages of these animals
- Report all animal bites and scratches

➤ Infection Control

- Isolation area (see below)
- Sanitation and waste management
 - Daily waste removal and disposal
 - Daily cleaning and disinfection

Veterinary Care and Involvement

- Incoming animals need to be thoroughly examined
- Daily visual health checks should be performed
- **Isolation of Sick Animals**
 - A separate area for sick or exposed animals should be set up
 - Animals showing illness should immediately be examined by a veterinarian
 - Any confirmed diseases should be reported to the Incident Command Structure
 - Information on the disease, along with any precautionary measures for handling the animal should be placed on the animal's cage
 - The number of individuals caring for animals in the isolation area should be limited to only those necessary for direct care
 - Protective clothing should be worn and then removed before leaving the isolation area

Additional Resources

- ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Sample Plans for Evacuation and Sheltering <http://www.aspcapro.org/sample-plans-for-evacuation-and-shelteri.php>
- American Veterinary Medical Association. Emergency: Preparedness and Response Guide https://ebusiness.avma.org/EBusiness50/files/productdownloads/emerg_prep_resp_guide.pdf
- AVMA/CDC. Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=19712
- Louisiana State Animal Response Team. Companion Animal Evacuation and Sheltering Manual www.lsart.org/refid,12776/refDownload.pml
- LSU Emergency Animal Shelter Disaster Response Manual <http://www.lsuemergencyanimalshelter.org/>
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Lessons Learned Information Sharing: Shelter Operations – Pet-Friendly Shelters <http://www.lsart.org/sites/site-1707/documents/ShelterOperations-PetFriendlyShelters2.pdf>

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