



Guide to Developing the Shelter Function of a Community Animal Response Plan (CARP)

Basic Considerations for Sheltering Livestock or Household Pets - March 20, 2008 -

I. Planning Steps for Shelter Development:

A. Events Affecting the Community and Types of Animal Concentrations

1. List the natural and man-made disasters that could occur and require the activation of a community's animal shelters, such as:
 - Wildfires
 - Floods
 - Tornadoes
 - Hurricanes
 - Hazardous material incidents
 - Other

2. Determine the types and numbers of animals in the community that would require shelter in the event of a disaster.
 - a. Examples of types of animals are:
 - Household pets (see FEMA DAP 9523.19)
 - Livestock in Concentrated Feeding Operations
 - Exotic or zoo animals
 - Research animals (ensure any research facilities in the community have alternative sheltering arrangements considered in their emergency plans)
 - Animals, such as those in vet clinics, boarding kennels, etc.
 - b. Concentrations of animals may require a community to develop different types of shelters.
 - See attachment page for definitions of different types of animal shelters.
 - c. For unique animals, such as research animals, delicate birds, exotic animals or large reptiles, that might require specialized care, develop a list of pet stores, zoos, or sanctuaries that may be able to assist with the care of those animals.
 - d. A jurisdiction may also need to consider animals from another community if it has developed a "point to point" shelter agreement with a coastal community in the event of a hurricane, or has made a mutual aid agreement with a neighboring community.
 - Coordinate with emergency management officials in the community to address potential point-to-point or mutual aid responsibilities

B. Location of Shelter

1. Develop a list of pet friendly hotels in the area.

2. Find the human shelters in the community and explore setting up a pet-friendly shelter or a shelter either adjacent to or within that facility.
 - a. For example:
 - Separate rooms inside a facility such as a convention center

- A school gymnasium located near a school being used as a shelter
 - Recreation hall at a community center
 - Locker rooms within a school facility, but on a separate air-handling system.
 - Other
- b. Determine the approximate capacity of the human shelters to estimate possible numbers of animals that may need to be sheltered.
 - c. Verify if any of the human shelters will allow pets.
3. Explore other existing locations in the community that could be used as an animal-only emergency shelter. Examples include:
 - Fairgrounds
 - Existing shelters such as animal control facilities
 - Boarding kennels or groomers
 - Exposition centers or rodeo arenas
 - Veterinary clinics
 - Sale barns
 - Stables or ranches
 - High school or college agricultural facilities
 - Camp grounds or park facilities
 - Other

C. Shelter Staff

1. List volunteer groups that exist in the community that might be willing to operate a pet or livestock shelter. Examples to consider are:
 - 4-H clubs and FFA chapters
 - Local animal groups such as non-profit rescue groups or breed clubs
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Veterinarians and veterinary technicians
 - Collegiate organizations
 - Rodeo teams or riding clubs
 - Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
 - Other civic groups
2. List “for hire” resources that exist in the community. Examples to consider include:
 - Livestock handlers
 - Livestock haulers
 - Veterinarians and veterinary technicians
 - Boarding kennels and stables
 - Fencing and feed supply stores
 - Pet stores
 - Other
3. Determine training needs of volunteers and begin developing and providing staff training. Essential training for shelter staff includes:
 - a. Basic animal handling skills
 - Samples of training can be located at www.txsart.org
 - b. Train all volunteers in the basic Incident Command System (ICS).
 - ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800

- ICS training allows the shelter operations to integrate with other emergency response operations in the community.
 - Links to ICS training can be located at www.fema.gov.
4. Develop a process for evaluating and training spontaneous volunteers during a disaster. Have the policy and procedures in place and provide every volunteer with a printed copy.
 5. Develop and provide volunteers with official identification that complies with responder identification requirements within the community.

D. Shelter Equipment and Supplies

1. Evaluate the type of animal shelter being developed. Sheltering livestock will require different equipment than sheltering household pets. There may be members of the community who have specialized experience in handling livestock or small animals and could serve as a resource for information on different equipment needs. Resources for the following shelter types include:
 - a. Livestock shelters
 - Texas Animal Health Commission Inspector assigned to the community
 - Texas AgriLife Extension Agent for the county
 - Large animal veterinary practitioner
 - Representative from local fair grounds or exposition center
 - Other
 - b. Household pet shelters
 - Animal control officer
 - Small animal veterinary practitioner
 - Humane Societies
 - Other
2. Locate and inventory all shelter materials that currently are available in the community. Supply needs may vary according to locations selected, for instance:
 - A boarding kennel will already have a great deal of the equipment needed to shelter pets.
 - A gymnasium will need additional equipment to protect the facility and house animals.
 - Fairgrounds may have pens available to set up stalls for different kinds of livestock.
3. Determine additional supplies and equipment that would be needed to operate a shelter. Explore innovative, low-cost ideas for equipping shelters.
 - Lists of shelter equipment are available at www.txstart.org.
4. Explore options for acquiring additional supplies, such as:
 - Fundraising by non-profit groups
 - Homeland Security grants obtained by the Councils of Government
 - Grants through private corporations or non-profit groups, etc
 - Donations from local feed and equipment suppliers or manufacturers
 - Other

5. Locate a storage facility for shelter equipment and supplies.
6. Develop written agreements, such as a contract, a memorandum of understanding (MOU), or a memorandum of agreement (MOA), with private facilities, businesses, veterinarians and volunteer groups to reserve the facility as a shelter, to outline conditions for its use, to resolve liability issues, etc. prior to its activation as a shelter. Also develop written agreements with volunteer groups and “for hire” resources to outline the organization’s role in response, requirements for participation, and expectations from community officials. (See FEMA DAP 9523.19)

II. Planning for the Activation of the Shelter

A. Shelter Communications

1. The Animal Issues Committee (AIC) needs to assign a responder to serve in the community’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or to be in communication with the local responding officials.
 - a. Determine what process will initiate the activation of the shelter, such as:
 - Activation of the EOC
 - Opening of a human shelter
 - Other
 - b. Determine a process to assess the scope of the event. A review of prior events can assist in the development of the process. Knowing the scope of the event will help the AIC decide:
 - Amount of assets to activate
 - Which assets to activate
 - Duration of the activation
 - Type of shelter needed
 - c. Develop a process to assess when a shelter has reached its capacity and if overflow plans need to be activated. Options to consider for overflow plans include:
 - Fostering animals
 - For-hire kennels
2. Develop and have prepared public service announcements (PSA) to disseminate shelter information. Coordinate all information through the emergency management officials to ensure consistent messages are communicated to the public.
 - a. Information that could be released to the public includes:
 - Shelters openings
 - Locations of reception centers to receive evacuees if used in the community
 - Locations and types of shelters available if reception centers are not used
 - Shelter closings
 - Donation “drop off” points
 - b. Determine how best to disseminate information to the community.
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Newspapers
 - Flyers
 - Public Information Officer for the community

- Other
 - c. Locate and maintain the contact information of interpreters for the hearing impaired and non-English speaking populations so that shelter policies can be clearly communicated and forms can be correctly and clearly filled out. PSAs should also be translated into multiple languages.
3. Report shelter openings and numbers and types of animals sheltered to the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or to the Disaster District Committee.

B. Shelter Operations

1. Develop standard operation procedures (SOPs) for shelters in the community. Issues to consider for the operation of a community animal shelter include:
 - a. Development of appropriate forms, such as:
 - Release of liability form
 - Check-in form with a description of the animal, health history of animal (if available), and the owner's contact information
 - Logs to track animal care
 - b. Development of a shelter check-in process
 - Determine if the community has a central reception center for evacuees and coordinate with reception center procedures
 - Ensure animal owners are provided copies of all pertinent information such as rules and procedures
 - Maintain a copy of all forms with the animal owner's signature in shelter records
 - Determine the availability of equipment such as computers, printers, copiers, etc. and locate technical support for those resources
 - c. Translation of forms for non-English speakers
 - d. Determine of a method to identify and track animals, such as:
 - Microchips
 - Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tagging
 - Paper forms with digital or Polaroid pictures of owners and animals
 - Paint brands for livestock
 - e. Development of policies for animal health considerations, such as:
 - Best management practices to prevent the spread of disease
 - Isolation of sick animals
 - Consultations with local veterinary practitioners
 - Policy for the treatment of sick or injured animals
 - Vaccination protocols
 - Alternative plans for aggressive animals
 - f. Establishment of rules and procedures for animal owners:
 - Behavior at the shelter
 - Visitation hours
 - Transport between human shelters and animal-only shelters
 - Prohibitions on handling animals belonging to others
 - Safety considerations
 - Proper identification and forms to access the shelter or to claim animals
 - g. Development of rules and procedures for staff:
 - Assign specific tasks and roles according to training
 - Set daily schedule of events and tasks

- Procedure to report sick animals
 - Develop procedures for mortality disposal
 - Establish guidelines for animal waste disposal
 - Carry official identification at all times
- h. Report animal bites according to the Department of State Health Services and local procedures
 - i. Development of a system to manage resources:
 - Report financial transactions
 - Track volunteer time
 - Track expenses
 - Integrate animal donations management into human donations management

2. Links to standard operating procedures can be found at www.txsart.org.

3. Provide for the needs of animal owners and for shelter staff, such as:

- a. Safety and health of volunteers and animal owners
 - Access to medical assistance when needed
 - Protocols and procedure to prevent the spread of zoonotic disease to shelter staff
 - Resources for counseling for animal owners and staff
 - Security of site to prevent theft of animals, vandalism, etc.
- b. Amenities to support shelter staff such as lavatories, food, break areas, etc.

C. Demobilization of Shelter and Post Event Planning

1. Plans to demobilize the shelter must be implemented when the shelter is opened. Tasks to consider include:

- a. Estimate the length of time the shelter can be supported during the event
- b. Locate alternative sheltering for animals that are not abandoned, but need long term housing after the shelter has been closed
- c. Develop a procedure for processing abandoned animals
- d. Collect shelter equipment:
 - Inventory equipment and supplies
 - Clean and disinfect equipment
 - Return equipment to storage or to the original owner
- e. Clean and disinfect the shelter.
 - The premises should be returned to its original condition, prior to shelter activation
 - All equipment belonging to the facility should be returned to its original location or returned to the storage area for the facility

2. Conduct an after action-review and write an after-action report with the shelter staff.

- a. Note processes that were successful and plan to sustain them.
- b. Discuss processes that need improvement and plan to correct them.
- c. Amend existing plans to show the corrections.
- d. Ensure animal plans continue to coincide with existing emergency management plans in the community

3. Continue to exercise shelter plans.

Shelter-Related Definitions, Acronyms, and Web Links

Types of Animal Shelters:

Animal-only – A shelter facility that is designated for animals, it is not located near a human shelter.

Animals with people – A shelter facility where people and pets are housed in the same dormitory area, i.e. have the same ventilation system. This is the least labor intensive as pets are solely cared for by their owners.

Co-located – Also known as parallel. A shelter facility where animals are housed on the same property as the human shelter; the animal shelter can be in an adjacent structure or it can be located in the same building, but usually has a separate ventilation system from the human portion. This requires additional staff for the pets, but owners contribute the majority of the care due to the proximity of facilities.

Large animal or livestock – A shelter facility designated for large livestock such as cattle, horses, goats, sheep, swine, etc. with the specialized equipment and adequate space to address the needs of large animals.

Pet-friendly shelter – A generic term used to describe ways to shelter people and pets during an emergency or disaster.

Acronyms:

ACO – Animal Control Officer

AIC – Animal Issues Committee

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

ICS – Incident Command System

MOU/MOA – Memorandum of understanding/agreement

PSA – Public service announcement

SOP – Standard operating procedure

TAHC – Texas Animal Health Commission

TXSART – Texas State Animal Resource Team

Web Links

- To locate links on specialized shelter related information go to:
www.txsart.org
- To locate links to Animal Issues Committee planning materials go to:
www.tahc.state.tx.us
- To locate information on local emergency management planning annexes go to:
<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/pages/index.htm>
- To locate information on zoonotic diseases or procedures to report animal bites go to:
www.dshs.state.tx.us