

## **Attachment 6**

### **Animal Care**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this annex is to:

- A. Provide guidance for the protection of people and their animals prior to, during, and after a catastrophic disaster situation.
- B. Ensure the effective evacuation, sheltering, and safe return of companion animals and livestock to their place of origin.
- C. Outline state and local government responsibilities to accomplish the above.
- D. Provide information and recommended actions to assist local governments in accomplishing these tasks.

#### **II. EXPLANATION OF TERMS**

##### **A. Acronyms**

AC	Animal Care (a section of APHIS)
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA)
ASPCA	American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
EARS	Emergency Animal Rescue Service (see also UAN)
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
JIC	Joint Information Center
PSA	Public Service Announcement
TACA	Texas Animal Control Association
TAHC	Texas Animal Health Commission
TFHS	Texas Federation of Humane Societies
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
TRACE	Texas Rural Awareness, Compliance, and Education (TAHC and USDA-APHIS-VS)
TVMA	Texas Veterinary Medical Association
TXSART	Texas State Animal Resource Team
UAN	United Animal Nations (see also EARS)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VS	Veterinary Services (a section of APHIS)

## B. Definitions

1. There are numerous terms used relative to animals (see the following). This plan, however, primarily discusses “service animals” and “companion animals.”
  - a. Companion animal: Pets and other domesticated animals, including equines, which are raised for their special relationship with people (also called the human-animal bond). These animals may include many varied species such as cats, dogs, mice, rats, hamsters, snakes, spiders, fish, birds, pot-bellied pigs, etc.
  - b. Production animal: Animals raised for their use as a food or other marketable product (e.g., livestock).
  - c. Specialty animal: Animals used for their unique capabilities (e.g., racing, exotic game, substance detection, etc.).
  - d. Research animal: Animals used for product testing, drug production, genetic studies, etc.
  - e. Zoo animal: Animals maintained in public and private facilities for viewing by the public.
  - f. Service animal: Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.
  - g. The precise difference between a companion animal, a food production animal, a research animal, a zoo animal, a specialty animal, and a service animal may not always be clear, and many of these animals may serve a dual purpose.
2. Species refers to the type of animal.
3. Pet-Only Shelter is one where only the shelter managers and workers, not the animal owners, are permitted entry on a routine basis.
4. Pet-Friendly Shelter is one where the owners and their animals can be housed together. (Note: In some instances, pet-friendly shelters can house birds, reptiles, and other unique types of animals if the animals are properly caged and cared-for by their owners.) This term can also apply to various forms of transportation (e.g., pet-friendly buses, etc).
5. Large Animal Facility is one designated for livestock, horses, and “exotic” or unique types of animals (reptiles, large pot-bellied pigs, spiders, etc.)

for which proper care cannot usually be provided in a normal animal shelter

#### **IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS**

##### **A. Situation**

1. Natural and manmade disasters can affect animals as well as humans.
2. Prior to or during an emergency or disaster event, people in harm's way may be asked to, or required to, protect themselves by evacuating from an area of higher risk to an area of relative safety. Companion, and other animals, living with these threatened individuals, will be placed in the same circumstances, and will need to be evacuated.
3. The human-animal bond can be a unique and powerful force in decision-making, especially when deciding when and if to evacuate from a potentially risky situation.
4. Companion and other animals are generally unable to evacuate safely without assistance from their owner(s) or a care giver(s).
5. During recent hurricane events, some people, needing transportation, would not evacuate because they were not permitted to take along their companion animals. Others went ahead and evacuated, but were forced to leave their animals behind.
6. For catastrophic emergency situations, evacuation recommendations and procedures, appropriate transportation vehicles and routes, and designated host areas are being developed by the State and local governments.
7. The American Red Cross will not allow animals into their shelters, with the exception of specialized service animals like guide dogs.
8. Many public lodging facilities (e.g., motels, hotels) will not accept animals.
9. The Governor, through the Chief, Governor's Division of Emergency Management, has stated that no person should be denied available transportation out of a risk area because he or she desires to evacuate with his or her companion animal(s).
10. Companion animals will accompany their owners in state-provided/contracted transportation vehicles, if at all possible.

11. The Governor's Executive Order (RP57) requires that the State develop and implement a plan to "...address the evacuation and shelter needs of individuals with companion animals."
12. The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), as a member of the State Emergency Management Council, has been designated by the Governor as the state agency most appropriate to coordinate the evacuation and sheltering of animals.

## **B. Assumptions**

1. Operations involving the evacuation and sheltering of people from risk areas will also involve the evacuation and sheltering of their companion animals.
2. Because of the human-animal bond, many people evacuating from a disaster will want to take their animals and remain with their animals for the duration of the emergency.
3. Those same amenities that are considered for evacuees should also be considered for companion animals (e.g., adequate food, clean water, appropriate bedding, relief and exercise areas, etc.)
4. In spite of the danger, some people will refuse to evacuate if they are not permitted to bring along and remain with their companion animal(s).
5. **Pet ownership is a personal responsibility. Owners are responsible for making evacuation and sheltering plans that include their animals, and then handling and caring for these animals while they are away from their primary residence.**
6. **Pet owners, who evacuate with their pets, will be asked to bring such items as health papers, small amounts of food and water, medicines, and other pet-related equipment (e.g., collars, leashes, small or collapsible carriers, bowls, muzzles, etc.).**
7. Persons having their own transportation out of the risk area, and taking along a companion animal(s), will take that animal(s) with them in their own vehicle(s).
8. Many individuals, having their own transportation out of a risk area and taking along their companion animals, will not seek public shelter, but will rather attempt to obtain private lodging for themselves and their companion animal(s) (e.g., at pet-friendly motels/hotels or at the homes of friends or relatives).

9. Many evacuees, not having their own transportation, will still want to take along their companion animals, and they will want to be sheltered in host areas along with their pets.
10. Some of the people asked to, or required to, evacuate will choose to leave their pet(s) behind.
11. Of those animals left behind, some will be confined in a home or other facility, others in a fenced-in area, and still others restrained only by a chain, rope, or some type of leash. Other pets will be left unconfined to fend for themselves.
12. Some individuals evacuating from risk areas without their animals will try to return to the area of risk before it is safe to do so in order to locate and/or care for their animals. Some of these individuals will not heed the advice or orders of authorities in regard to entering the affected areas after the storm has passed.
13. When evacuees and their animals are allowed to return to their place of origin, they will generally use the same transportation method as when they left the area of risk.
14. Some evacuees will not evacuate at the time or to the destination specified by local authorities.
15. In spite of some travel and lodging prohibitions, some evacuees will not want to be separated from their companion animal(s), either while in transit or while being sheltered.
16. Some animals will pose a threat to other animals and to people. Therefore, animals being evacuated aboard public transportation need to be appropriately restrained and muzzled, or confined.
17. Some animals may die during the evacuation, sheltering, or return process, and their carcasses will need to be properly handled and disposed.
18. Under the right circumstances and using proper procedures, animals and people can be sheltered together in "pet friendly" shelters.
19. For shelter management efficiency and effectiveness, large and small animals will generally be kept in separate shelters or separate areas of the same shelter.

20. Some communities will have insufficient shelter space, operational personnel, or support services and equipment, to cope with and handle all the animals that are evacuating to their jurisdiction from a risk area(s).
21. Some personnel providing care for evacuated animals will not be trained or skilled in that animal care function.
22. Companion animals will need some of the same general care as people during their time en route to and while at shelters (e.g., appropriate food, clean water, sanitary conditions, an appropriate place to relieve themselves, an area where they can be exercised, etc.)
23. Some people will attempt to steal animals that are being evacuated and/or sheltered, under the guise of providing care for them.
24. Depending on many factors, animals may need to be handled differently based on their species. Some companion animals will need special care and/or isolation from other animals and/or humans (e.g., snakes, spiders, etc.) Other animals, such as large livestock, will need to be housed in separate, specialized facilities.
25. Animal caregivers sometimes feel that the animal for which they are caring, especially if has been rescued, should be given to them. These persons may be very reluctant to part with the animal if the owner returns or is located.
26. Some transportation providers will not permit animals to be transported in the same vehicles as the evacuees. Conversely, some evacuees will not want animals on board the vehicle in which they are traveling. Therefore, pet-friendly and people-only vehicles should be considered.
27. Companion animals, accompanying evacuees who need transportation out of the risk areas, will remain with their owners. However, if this is not possible, the animals will be transported to the same general location (e.g., city or county) as their owners.
28. Whether or not the companion animals accompany their owners on the same transportation vehicle, each animal will be positively identified and linked to their owner(s).

## **V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

### **A. General**

1. The animal care and welfare function, for the purposes of the state emergency management system, will fall under the emergency support

function (ESF) (being developed) for “Animals and Agriculture,” which is being designated as Annex O of the State of Texas Emergency Management Plan. The State has designated those jurisdictions within a risk area as “evacuation” jurisdictions and those which can accept evacuees for sheltering as “host” jurisdictions.

2. The State has also paired selected evacuation and host jurisdictions, so they can work together in the evacuation and shelter process if a catastrophic disaster event is anticipated or occurs.
3. Each local jurisdiction is encouraged to develop an Animal Issues Committee (AIC) made up of people who have an interest in, or responsibility for, the welfare of animals in the community (see model Appendix 4 of Annex N of the model local emergency management plan).
4. Each jurisdiction’s AIC should, in turn, prepare an evacuation or shelter plan, as appropriate, for animals that may be affected by a catastrophic disaster.
5. A key to this process is for each evacuation jurisdiction to determine the approximate number of animals expected to evacuate from their risk area(s) that will require shelter in the respective host area(s).
  - a. This information can be determined by first knowing (1) the approximate total number of individuals who are expected to evacuate from the jurisdiction and (2) the total number of evacuees who will need transportation assistance. By subtracting (2) from (1), the number of evacuees expected to have their own transportation can be determined.
  - b. Of those persons evacuating with their own transportation, a certain percentage will take their companion animal(s) with them and that factor will be provided by TAHC. These animals may or may not need public shelter based on the lodging decisions of their owner(s) (see IV.B.6. above). An appropriate percentage factor to compute the number of those animals needing public shelter will be provided by TAHC.
  - c. For evacuees without transportation, another percentage will be provided by the TAHC to determine the expected number of companion animals they will be taking with them. Since these evacuees will all need public shelter, so too will their animals.
  - d. Finally, the total number of companion animals needing shelter in a host area can be determined by adding the above two final amounts together (i.e., b. plus c. above).

6. Once the anticipated number of evacuating animals needing sheltering is determined, that information should be passed to the designated host jurisdiction(s) so an appropriate shelter(s) can be prepared to “host” the animals.
7. Procedures then need to be developed to provide for the transportation of the companion animals (and their evacuee owners) from their place of origin to shelters in the host jurisdiction(s).
  - a. Evacuees, together with their companion animal(s), will first need to be transported from their point of origin (e.g., normally their home residence) to a central **evacuation hubs** location(s) within the jurisdiction. This will normally be accomplished via the use of public or government-provided transportation (i.e., vehicles that have been pre-approved to transport both people and animals within the jurisdiction).
  - b. At the central **evacuation hubs**, evacuees should be permitted to board transportation vehicles together with their companion animals (i.e., on pet-friendly transportation vehicles). Those evacuees not having animals with them, or those not wanting to be transported with animals, should be afforded the opportunity to board “people-only” vehicles.
  - c. If there is a need, for transport purposes, to separate the evacuee owners from their companion animals, then the animals should travel to the designated host location(s) in special transport vehicle(s) and the evacuees to the same host area in another type(s) of conveyance.
  - d. In situations where animals are being transported separately, then the transport vehicles must provide for adequate ventilation as well as a means for providing food and water en route and a way to separate the animals (cages, carriers, etc.) to preclude fighting and possibly injury or death to the animals.
  - e. A companion animal(s), accompanying its owner, needs to be appropriately restrained while en route on the transport vehicle to the designated host area. This can be accomplished by the use of appropriate carriers, cages, leashes, etc. All animals not confined in a carrier in the pet-friendly transport vehicle should be muzzled.
  - f. Prior to embarkation, each animal needs to be appropriately tagged and identified so it and its owner can travel together as a consolidated unit or can easily be reunited at the designated host area(s), if they have to be separated.



8. If the evacuation jurisdiction needs to use separate transport vehicles for animals and for people (not recommended), then the evacuee vehicles and the animal transport vehicles will not necessarily have to stay together en route to the host location(s), as long as both are destined for the same area(s) and proper identification of the animals has been accomplished prior to departure.
9. Short stops (i.e., rest or comfort areas), while en route, may be designated by the State in concert with local governments, especially if the trip turns out to take longer than expected. These would be established so both animals and people, whether separate or together, can obtain water and a place for personal relief.
10. Upon arrival at the host area, one or more of the following types of shelters will probably be established for the animals:
  - a. A pet-friendly shelter (i.e., one that houses evacuees along with their companion animals, all in the same location). This is recommended.
  - b. A pet-only shelter (i.e., a separate shelter for pets). In this situation, the shelter(s) could be adjacent to the evacuee shelter(s) so the owners could take care of their pets on a regular basis, or it could be located at some distance from the evacuation shelter(s) in which case transportation would need to be provided so the evacuees could be with their animal(s) on a periodic basis to help in caring for them and be assured of their safety.
  - c. A large livestock shelter facility (i.e., one that is used to house larger companion animals, livestock, or unique animals that may not be appropriate for regular shelters such as horses, cattle, large pot-bellied pigs, snakes, spiders, mice and rats, etc.).
  - d. After the disaster event has passed, and the evacuees are permitted to return to their place of origin, the procedures outlined above should be handled in reverse order to ensure both evacuees and their animals are returned to their points of origin or home residences safely.

## **B. Activities by Phases Of Emergency Management**

The following activities and operations are those that should occur to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a catastrophic disaster involving companion animals. Specific responsibilities of agencies and organizations are outlined in Section VI. below.

1. **Prevention** (pre-disaster activities to lessen the impact or likelihood of recurrence and post-disaster activities to enhance preparedness and response future operations)
  - a. Establish an Animal Issues Committee (AIC)
  - b. Meet periodically to consider either evacuation or host issues as appropriate for the community.
  - c. Select key personnel who would be in charge of the various functions involving animals being evacuated or sheltered.
  - d. Select an overall incident commander(s) for the catastrophic animal response within the jurisdiction.
  - e. Determine who on the community's AIC should be a staff member of the jurisdiction's emergency operations center (EOC) when it is activated for an impending catastrophic disaster, and coordinate this recommendation with the EOC prior to event.
  - f. Take actions to procure necessary equipment and identify appropriate personnel (paid or volunteers) to adequately support an animal response operation within the community.
2. **Preparedness** (planning, training, and exercising)
  - a. Write an animal issues plan for either the evacuation or hosting of animals.
  - b. Train personnel on their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the plan.
  - c. Periodically conduct tabletop exercises in the community to discuss and test the validity of the catastrophic animal disaster response plan.
  - d. As needed, conduct a functional exercise to ensure all the personnel assigned to a particular function know where to go and what to do.
  - e. Revise the plan as necessary, but at least once every two years.
3. **Response** (reacting to and handling the event in the most efficient and effective manner possible)
  - a. If appropriate, establish a community animal incident command post (ICP), and take actions and activate the various functions as outlined in the plan.

- b. Report ongoing important animal-related information to the local EOC and/or the respective disaster district committee (DDC) headquarters, as appropriate.
4. **Recovery** (short and long-term activities to try to help restore the situation to an acceptable level similar to what it was prior to the event).
- a. After the catastrophic disaster event is over, from a response perspective, assemble all the major participants and conduct an after-action critique of what went right and what went wrong.
  - b. Ensure all animals and related equipment are returned to their rightful owners.

## **VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Organization**

1. The Governor and the county judge or city mayor, of the officially-designated jurisdictions within the State, are the chief elected officials ultimately responsible for the proper care of people and their companion animals during emergency and disaster situations.
2. The State Emergency Management Council, and all its member agencies and organizations, work from the State Operations Center (SOC) to support the State's emergency management system.
3. The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), as a member of the State Emergency Management Council, has been designated by the Chief, GDEM, as the agency responsible to coordinate actions necessary to ensure the safety of domesticated, livestock, research, and service animals in the state prior to, during, and after a disaster event. (This mission is not a state-legislated mission of TAHC.)
4. The TAHC undertakes its responsibilities by coordinating with animal humane organizations, supervising the actions of its response personnel, and by coordinating and approving actions of its associated Texas State Animal Resource Team (TXSART) organization.
5. The TXSART performs its responsibility by using the Incident Command System (ICS) and by employing various animal-related operational functions prior to, during, and after a disaster such as animal control and rescue, triage and treatment, shelter and care, identification and reunification, damage assessment, carcass disposal, donations management, and public information.

## B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. GDEM is responsible to:
  - a. Pair evacuation and host jurisdictions, and provide that information to each applicable jurisdiction.
  - b. Provide information on the total number of people who are expected to evacuate from each jurisdiction at risk, both those who will be using their own transportation and those who will need transportation.
  - c. Ensure that state-contracted evacuee transportation vehicles are “pet-friendly” as much as possible.
  - d. Ensure that appropriate food, water, and related equipment (e.g., soft-sided animal confinement bags or other carriers, leashes, muzzles, etc.) are provided for companion animals at the **evacuation hubs** along with the necessary supplies for the evacuees.
  - e. Provide an appropriate number and type of animal-transport vehicles, along with drivers, at the **evacuation hubs** to carry those animals that are not permitted to board the evacuee transport vehicles...
  - f. Coordinate with designated state agencies and local jurisdictions along the evacuation routes to identify and assist in staffing rest or comfort stops that can be used for animals, and their owners, to obtain necessary fluids and obtain appropriate relief.
2. The TAHC is responsible to:
  - a. Establish a non-profit organization, the Texas State Animal Resource Team (TXSART), to assist the Commission in coordinating and implementing its responsibilities regarding animals in emergencies throughout the State.
  - b. Provide the information needed to evacuation jurisdictions to calculate the anticipated total number of companion animals evacuating from a risk area, which will need transportation and sheltering.
  - c. Provide, through its personnel and the TXSART, advice and assistance to local communities regarding the transportation, rescue, identification, sheltering, and care of companion animals, as well as appropriate donations management for those activities.

- d. Provide GDEM with information on the types of vehicles that would be appropriate for transporting (i.e., evacuating) animals out of the risk area(s), if required.
  - e. Provide GDEM with information on the types of supplies that would be needed to control and care for animals on pet-friendly transportation vehicles.
  - f. Supervise the actions of the TXSART in coordinating the movement and sheltering of companion animals evacuating from the various risk areas along the Texas coast.
  - g. Provide local jurisdictions with procedures on how to establish an Animal Issues Committee.
  - h. Advise local jurisdictions as to where they can obtain information and procedures for evacuating animals and/or establishing and operating various types of animal shelters (this will eventually be done by through TXSART; see subparagraph l. below).
  - i. Provide a model animal issues plan for local jurisdictions, and then provide advice to jurisdictions on the development of their individual animal-related emergency plans.
  - j. Provide a list of identified large-animal holding facilities to each disaster district committee (DDC) and to local governments, as needed.
  - k. When requested, staff the affected DDC(s) and the State Operations Center (SOC) with a TAHC or USDA-APHIS-VS staff member to handle and provide overall coordination of the animal evacuation and sheltering issues.
  - l. Employ the TXSART to identify needs and coordinate donations related to animal care and support during disaster situations.
  - m. Provide ongoing and updated information, as available, to the State Operations Center (SOC) regarding the status and issues related to animals being evacuated, transported, and sheltered in a disaster event.
3. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is responsible to:
- a. Assist the host jurisdiction with signage showing where information can be found regarding the sheltering of large and small animals within that community, as well as people.

- b. If a temporary comfort or rest stop(s) is established along a major roadway(s), then coordinate with the applicable jurisdiction to obtain support for the temporary facility, to include the care of the animals that are accompanying the evacuees.
4. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is responsible to:
- a. Identify to TAHC and appropriate local jurisdictions those state park lands that would be available in a catastrophic disaster to temporarily house animals, primarily large animals and livestock.
  - b. Work with the local jurisdictions and TAHC to prepare for and house those animals during the disaster event.
5. The evacuation jurisdiction is responsible to:
- a. Establish an Animal Issues Committee.
  - b. Ensure an animal-related official, or other government-designated person, is a part of the jurisdiction's emergency operations center (EOC), when it is activated.
  - c. Ensure the animal-related official in the EOC maintains an awareness of any animal-related disaster activities and events taking place within the jurisdiction and reports the significant ones, as applicable, to the appropriate DDC.
  - d. Prepare an evacuation plan for animals accompanying their owner(s) who do not have transportation from the risk area(s) to the appropriate host area(s). This plan, as a minimum, should include information on:
    - 1) The specific organizational structure of the group coordinating the animal evacuation, which should be in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
    - 2) Procedures for contacting appropriate personnel, activating these individuals, and staffing a central staging area(s) within the at-risk jurisdiction from which animals, and their owners, will be transported to a specified host area(s).
    - 3) Procedures for selecting and training the individuals (employees, volunteers, etc.) who will staff and operate the central staging facility(s) and other functions related to the evacuation process.

- 4) The process for identifying and reporting the number of animals who are expected to need transportation out of the risk area(s).
  - 5) The process for obtaining appropriate transport vehicles from the local and/or state government for transporting those companion animals who are not permitted to travel with their owners from their place of origin, to the central staging facility(s), and then on to the host area(s).
  - 6) The process for obtaining drivers for the special animal transportation vehicles.
  - 7) The process to be used for positively identifying and tagging each animal being transported out of the risk area(s) to make certain, if the animals are separated from their owners, that they can be reunited with them again in the a host area(s).
  - 8) The process used and availability of qualified personnel (veterinarians, veterinary technicians, etc.) to medically evaluate, isolate, and separately transport those animals that may be sick or potentially diseased.
  - 9) Releasing liability for those assisting in the animal evacuation process and transporting the animals.
- e. Determine who their host jurisdiction(s) is and provide its emergency officials with the numbers of animals they anticipate will evacuate and will need sheltering.
  - f. Dialogue on a frequent basis with the host jurisdiction(s) regarding animal issues prior to, during, and immediately after a disaster.
  - g. Provide specific information to the host jurisdiction regarding the positive identification of the animals and their owners that are being transported out of the risk areas to the specified host area(s).
  - h. Advise the host jurisdiction(s) when animals, along with people, have begun evacuating in anticipation of a catastrophic disaster situation.
  - i. During the evacuation operation, report key information on the animal evacuation process to their respective disaster district committee (DDC).
  - j. Identify, to the respective DDC, any operational, in-place, animal shelters of last resort (i.e., any areas from which animals have not be sufficiently evacuated and are being sheltered in place).

- k. Depending on the anticipated numbers of animals to be evacuated, ensure sufficient supplies (e.g., confinement bags, portable cages, leashes, muzzles, and limited food and water are available to support the evacuation operations.
  - l. Ensure appropriate 24-hour security at the central staging area(s) and other key facilities throughout the entire evacuation structure.
  - m. Establish a team for the rescue of animals that were not evacuated prior to the disaster event and have either been abandoned by their owners or, because of the devastation, have no means by which to receive adequate food and water.
  - n. Prepare a list of those materials and supplies that are scarce or not normally available and will be needed for evacuation staging area operations (e.g., appropriate animal transportation vehicles, appropriate food, clean water, collapsible feed/water bowls, portable cages, collapsible pet carriers, catch poles, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, leashes, muzzles, gloves, etc.).
  - o. Take actions to obtain those needed animal-related materials and supplies from various sources within their area (e.g., government purchases, grant applications, local animal humane organizations, potential donor agencies and individuals, mutual aid assistance from adjoining jurisdictions, etc.).
  - p. Identify any anticipated unfilled needs to the appropriate regional unified command structure (RUCS) for possible assistance during a catastrophic event
  - q. Report the status of ongoing evacuation activities to the appropriate DDC.
6. The host jurisdiction is responsible to:
- a. Establish an animal issues committee.
  - b. Ensure an animal issues official is a part of the jurisdiction's emergency operations center (EOC), when it is activated.
  - c. Ensure the animal issues official in the EOC maintains an awareness of any animal-related disaster issues or activities taking place within the jurisdiction and reports significant events, as applicable, to the appropriate DDC.



- d. Obtain, from the State, information regarding which jurisdiction(s) it is being asked to host.
- e. Obtain, from the evacuation jurisdiction(s), the anticipated number of animals that may be evacuating to their jurisdiction and expecting food and shelter within the community.
- f. Coordinate with other jurisdictions, further inland from the host area, to ensure these “overflow” jurisdictions are prepared to accept additional animals if the host jurisdiction is overwhelmed. (Note: If animals need to be moved to an overflow jurisdiction because of space constraints, and they are owned by evacuees who have no transportation, then these evacuees should also be moved to overflow jurisdiction if at all possible to be near their animals.)
- g. If the host jurisdiction is along a major evacuation route, work with the State in establishing a rest or comfort area, if the decision is made to do that, where evacuating animals can obtain clean water and relief.
- h. Prepare an animal-related host plan to include the following, as a minimum:
  - 1) A specific organizational structure that will be in accordance with NIMS and include clearly defined functional responsibilities.
  - 2) Identification of the most likely routes entering the jurisdiction from the area(s) of risk.
  - 3) Provisions for assisting in the State in establishment and staffing of a comfort or rest area(s) along major evacuation routes within the jurisdiction where animals, and their owners, can obtain appropriate fluids and personal relief.
  - 4) Provisions to employ road signage and public service announcements (using low-power radios, etc.) to provide instructions to incoming evacuees and their companion animals.
  - 5) Provisions for establishing a welcome or reception center(s) to greet evacuees with their companion animals (or evacuee buses and animal transport vehicles) and to direct them to appropriate sheltering facilities (e.g., via the use of maps, specific addresses, written directions, applicable contact information, etc.).
  - 6) Provisions for identifying, obtaining, and training sufficient personnel (jurisdiction employees, community volunteers, etc.) to

staff the road stop(s), welcome center(s) and the various animal shelters within the community on an around-the-clock basis.

- 7) Provisions for determining the appropriate qualifications/certifications of personnel assigned to the various animal facilities and functions within the community.
- 8) A list of pet-friendly motels in the area for use by those evacuees, with companion animals and their own transportation, arriving at the welcome center.
- 9) Selection of facilities to house and/or enclose the anticipated number of incoming animals (e.g., animal-only shelters, pet-friendly shelters, large animal facilities, etc.).
- 10) Provisions to ensure that each designated animal sheltering facility will have sufficient power, clean water, and appropriate ventilation, heating, and/or air conditioning, as necessary, to properly protect the health and welfare of the animals being sheltered.
- 11) Provisions to maintain the proper separation and protection of the sheltered animals (e.g., portable fencing, individual kennels, portable screens, large paneling, appropriate cages and carriers, etc.).
- 12) Provisions for adequate food, rest, and exercise of the animals while housed in the shelter facility (e.g., appropriate food for each species, animal exercise areas, appropriate bedding materials, areas for the relief of animals, etc.)
- 13) Provisions to ensure the precise identification (pictures, microchips, tags, etc.) of all animals entering and exiting the sheltering facility(s), as well as a specific identification of their owners.
- 14) Provisions for certified personnel (veterinarians, veterinary technicians, etc.) to evaluate and provide appropriate medical care for sick or injured animals housed within a sheltering facility(s) and/or area(s).
- 15) Development of specific rules, regulations, and policies governing the operation of animal sheltering facilities, to include such items as:
  - a) Registration and positive identification of the owner in the event the individual and the animal are separated or the owner cannot be located when the evacuees depart.

- b) Determination of the physical condition of each animal upon arrival at the shelter, and a means to care for (and potentially quarantine) those that are sick or injured.
  - c) Designation of liability for animal injuries, the transmission of animal diseases, etc., while in the shelter setting.
  - d) A procedure to deny shelter of livestock and pets of owners who want to drop off their animals at a shelter and travel elsewhere during the disaster.
  - e) Denial of shelter to owners who fail to comply with the rules and regulations.
  - f) Establishing what services and support will be provided (food, water, clean-up, exercising the animal, etc.), when these services will be provided, and at what expense, if any.
  - g) Providing responsibilities in writing to the owner for each type of shelter facility (e.g., who is responsible for feeding and watering the animal, cleaning up the pet's waste, exercising the animal, etc.).
  - h) Release of liability for shelter operational personnel, jurisdictional officials, and the jurisdiction as an entity.
  - i) A provision of clear and specific actions that will be taken by shelter managers if the pet(s) or larger animal(s) is(are) not picked-up at a designated time.
- 16) Ensure appropriate transportation is available between the people shelter(s) and the community's animal shelter(s) so the evacuees can reunite with and possibly care for their animals, if only on a temporary basis.
- 17) Activate a donations management group to identify specific animal-related sheltering needs, receive and process any donor offers, and establish a facility to appropriately store any donated materials received.
- 18) Specific identification of all incoming and departing animals to ensure they can be returned to their rightful owners, either when the evacuees depart the host area or when they have all reached their point of origin.

- 19) Ensure appropriate communications are available throughout the host area to coordinate all animal-related issues among the welcome center(s), the designated animal shelter(s), the people shelter(s), law enforcement authorities, animal issues committee personnel, the donations management group, and jurisdictional officials.
  - 20) Ensure appropriate 24-hour security at all animal shelters to preclude the theft of animals and associated equipment, as well as to prohibit the entry of persons not certified to be working within that shelter area(s).
  - 21) Identify any unfilled needs to the appropriate regional unified command structure (RUCS) for obtaining possible assistance during a catastrophic event.
  - 22) Establish provisions for the proper disposal of animal wastes as well as animal carcasses.
  - 23) Ensure appropriate clean-up personnel are identified who can return the animal sheltering facility to its former state after the disaster is over.
- i. Dialogue frequently with the evacuation jurisdiction(s) regarding any animal issues that may impact their host arrangements and planning in conjunction with a disaster event.
  - j. Keep the appropriate DDC informed of the availability and location of road stops for supplying fluids and relief for the evacuees and animals.
  - k. Determine the most commonly traveled routes into the jurisdiction and establish an appropriate welcome center, which is equipped to direct persons accompanied by animals to an appropriate shelter facility.
  - l. Depending on the anticipated number of animals requiring shelter within the jurisdiction, prepare a list of materials and supplies that are scarce or unavailable and may be needed for shelter operations (e.g., appropriate animal transportation vehicles, animal food and forage, clean water, feeding dishes and containers, cages, pet carriers, catch poles, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, leashes, gloves, muzzles, portable kennels, large animal panels, portable fencing for enclosures, appropriate bedding, etc.).
  - m. Using this list, take appropriate actions to procure necessary materials and supplies locally (e.g., through government purchases or grant applications and from local animal humane organizations, potential

donor agencies and individuals, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for mutual aid assistance, etc.).

- n. If there are still deficits, report these needs to the appropriate regional unified command structure (RUCS) for possible area-wide mutual aid in a disaster situation.
  - o. Prior to, during, and immediately after the disaster, report the status of sheltering activities to the appropriate DDC.
7. Each regional unified command structure (RUCS) that is preparing for or responding to a catastrophic disaster, is responsible to:
- a. Obtain information from its participating jurisdictions regarding deficits in their ability to evacuate, shelter, care for, and transport animals.
  - b. Be cognizant of the availability of animal-related supplies, materials, and capabilities maintained by its various participating jurisdictions that could be used in a disaster situation by other jurisdictions within its council of government (COG) area of responsibility (e.g., animal food and feed, cages, pet carriers, leashes, muzzles, catch poles, portable kennels, fencing, large animal panels, feed bowls, etc.).
8. Each DDC, preparing for or responding to a catastrophic disaster, is responsible to:
- a. Ensure that a TAHC or APHIS-USDA-VS person is assigned to the DDC to assist in all animal-related issues within the disaster district.
  - b. Work with its local jurisdictions to ensure all animal-related evacuation, transport, and sheltering operations are being carried out efficiently and effectively.
  - c. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to ensure that any animal-related requests for assistance are being handled in accordance with the state emergency management system.
  - d. Ensure local jurisdictions are updating and reporting their information on animal-related evacuation and/or sheltering operations to the DDC, as appropriate.
  - e. Report updated animal evacuation, transport, and sheltering information, received from its jurisdictions, to the TAHC representative in the SOC.

#### **IV. DIRECTION & CONTROL**

- A. Activities will be conducted pursuant to the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Animal care operations will include work in an Incident Command System (ICS) environment. Final decisions regarding animal issues within a jurisdiction rests with the jurisdiction's chief elected official, unless they are disease-related.
- B. TAHC and USDA-APHIS-VS personnel may be able to assist local jurisdictions; however, as state employees, their primary focus is at the state level. Formal requests for their assistance would need to be approved by the DDC commander or his designee.
- C. Requests for assistance regarding the rescue, evacuation, or sheltering of companion and other animals should follow the normal emergency management procedures and channels:
  - 1. First use locally available government and non-government resources, including assistance from animal humane organizations.
  - 2. If these are not available, look to mutual aid from other nearby jurisdictions.
  - 3. If this doesn't work, cities should check with their respective counties for assistance.
  - 4. If neither the city nor the county has the needed resource(s), each should then contact their appropriate regional unified command structure (RUCS) for help.
  - 5. Finally, if the appropriate RUCS (i.e., the local government regional council of government (COG) system) is unable to assist, then the request for assistance would be forwarded to the State via the appropriate disaster district committee (DDC).

#### **V. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT**

##### **A. Resource Support**

- 1. Each jurisdiction needs to first look at its own resources as well as those of the community before requesting state assistance.
- 2. Local and regional animal humane organizations frequently can play a key role in protecting and rescuing animals during a disaster, and these non-government agencies should be an integral part of the animal issues plans.

## **B. Communications**

1. Good communications are essential to the overall success of animal rescue, evacuation, and sheltering actions during a disaster event.
2. This not only refers to having the appropriate equipment and established radio frequencies by which all parties can communicate effectively, but it also means knowing who is in what position in the organizational structure that can assist in accomplishing the mission.
3. The key to most animal issues within a jurisdiction is having an effective Animal Issues Committee, knowing who the key players on that committee are, and then know how to effectively communicate with them in regards to animal operations before, during, and immediately after the disaster event.
4. It is also essential for effective communications and understanding that an animal issues person (e.g., the local animal control officer, etc.) be an integral staff person of any local emergency operations center (EOC) during a catastrophic disaster.

## **C. Reporting**

1. It is essential to the success of animal care operations during a disaster event that the various nodes within the emergency management system can talk to each other and report their status as well as their needs.
2. Individual jurisdictions, whether involved in the rescue, evacuation, or sheltering of animals, need to report what's happening to their respective DDC, generally to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) representative on that Committee.
3. Information on the status of the individual jurisdictions should be compiled at the DDC and then forwarded on to the TAHC representative in the State Operations Center (SOC). That individual will assess the overall animal situation throughout the State, coordinate with the TXSART if certain issues need to be resolved, and provide situation updates for inclusion in situation reporting (SITREP) to the Governor.