



**By planning for the safety and well-being of pets during a disaster, we can save human lives.**

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**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Animal Care

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The time to plan for the safety and well-being of household pets during a disaster

**IS NOW**

The Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 established a mandate for States and localities to incorporate plans that account for the needs of people with household pets and service animals. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Response Framework outlines the roles of Federal, State, local, and nongovernmental entities in managing pets during disasters.

This mandate is a lifesaver—for both pets and people. One of the many important lessons learned after Hurricane Katrina is that making sure pets are safe during a disaster can make it easier to evacuate their owners—a practice proven to save many *human* lives.

Saving lives during a disaster is everyone's goal. That is why the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and its Animal Care program stand ready to help. We serve as a powerful planning resource that State and local officials can turn to in advance of a disaster. During a response, we can provide a critical source of expertise and support where it's needed most.

When a disaster strikes, things happen quickly. That is why the right time to make critical emergency response decisions is now—before a disaster occurs.

***Protecting the safety and welfare of pets in disasters plays an increasingly important role in our overall response efforts.***

# Keeping people and pets SAFE



According to a 2007 Harvard School of Public Health survey in high-risk hurricane areas, more than 25 percent of respondents said they would not obey evacuation orders because they would not want to leave their pets behind.

That is a troubling statistic, given the fact that timely evacuations are among our most effective tools for saving lives during emergencies. But it is also a trend that can be turned to our advantage. Because of the powerful bond between a pet and owner, pets may be lifesavers during a disaster by motivating owners to make an early evacuation.



By creating a plan that provides for the safe evacuation, transportation, shelter, and care of pets during a disaster—and by clearly communicating that plan to residents—emergency response officials can and will save the greatest number of lives, both human and animal.

# APHIS has a history of animal CARE



For nearly 40 years, through the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, APHIS' Animal Care program has played a primary role in protecting animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially, or exhibited to the public. In addition, APHIS has unique expertise in the humane management of animal populations in the face of disease outbreaks.

The safe movement, housing, husbandry, and reunion of household pets with their owners requires a broad set of skills. APHIS' Animal Care program is positioned to deliver precisely those skills, with expertise ranging from veterinary medical issues and animal facility management to the technical evaluation of housing and transportation environments.

With extensive hands-on subject expertise—and a mission area closely aligned with maintaining the safety and well-being of pets—APHIS' Animal Care program staff is highly qualified and fully prepared to work with State and local emergency responders and humane organizations to support household pet issues in disaster planning and response.



# How APHIS' Animal Care Unit can HELP



## Before a disaster...

Throughout the planning process, APHIS' Animal Care program can be a powerful resource for State and local emergency coordinators and other groups assisting States in planning an effective emergency response for household pets.

- **Shelter and Transportation:** We deliver technical support and subject-matter expertise, including details on appropriate housing environments, heat stress monitoring, and transport vehicle options.
- **Planning Facilitation:** By bringing together all of the stakeholders—from Federal, State, and local planners to nongovernmental organizations—we can help streamline the planning process, identify best practice models, and help to locate potential resources for building State and local capacities.
- **Training Opportunities:** At the State and local level, our employees can provide specific training in animal emergency management.

## During a disaster...

At the request of State officials, APHIS' Animal Care employees can be available on the ground to support communication, aid in resource management, provide technical assistance, conduct situational assessments, and help with the transition to recovery. They can also act as liaisons

with other concerned stakeholders, such as humane organizations, professional associations, and the private sector.



- **Staffing:** We can support command and multi-agency coordination centers, such as State emergency operations centers.
- **Situation Assessment:** We can provide teams to assist States or communities in evaluating the needs and well-being of pets during response and recovery.
- **Expedite Requests:** In response to a State's request for resources, we may be able to identify and provide critical resources in collaboration with FEMA.
- **Regulated Facilities:** Extensive experience working with facilities regulated by the Animal Welfare Act has positioned us to provide technical support in emergency response for zoos, aquariums, biomedical research facilities, and licensed commercial pet facilities.

## The time to plan is NOW...

And we can help. To find out more about how APHIS' Animal Care program can assist in your planning process, please visit our Web site, [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/ep](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/ep) or call APHIS Animal Care Emergency Programs at (301) 851-3752.