

**RHODE ISLAND GUIDE TO OPERATION OF  
EMERGENCY PET SHELTERS**

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FORMS (6-8-F)

- [Pet Owner Sheltering Agreement](#) (6-8-F01)
- [Animal Record](#) (6-8-F02)
- [Equine Record](#) (6-8-F03)
- [Animal Daily Care](#) (6-8-F04)
- [Animal Sign-out and Sign-in](#) (6-8-F05)
- [Bite Report](#) (6-8-F06)
- [Bite Protocol](#) (6-8-F07)
- [Authorization for Emergency Veterinary Care](#) (6-8-F08)
- [Shelter Release to Veterinary Care](#) (6-8-F09)
- [Failure to Comply Notice](#) (6-8-F10)
- [Animal Sighting and Rescue Request](#) (6-8-F11)
- [Permit to Enter Property for Recovery](#) (6-8-F12)
- [Truck Manifest for Emergency Evacuation](#) (6-8-F13)
- [State of RI General Release of All Claims](#) (6-8-F14)
- [Volunteer Duty Roster](#) (6-8-F15)
- [Staff Sign-in and Sign-out](#) (6-8-F16)
- [Log of Volunteer Hours](#) (6-8-F17)
- [Phone Log](#) (6-8-F18)
- [Shift Situation Report](#) (6-8-F19)
- [Shelter Situation Report](#) (6-8-F20)
- [Supply Request](#) (6-8-F21)
- [Donations Received](#) (6-8-F22)

SIGNAGE (6-8-S)

- [Control Your Pet](#) (6-8-S01)
- [Arrow](#) (6-8-S02)
- [Registration Area](#) (6-8-S03)
- [Banding Area](#) (6-8-S04)
- [Dog Walk Area](#) (6-8-S05)
- [Loading Area](#) (6-8-S06)
- [Isolation Area](#) (6-8-S07)
- [Exit](#) (6-8-S08)
- [Bite Warning and Quarantine](#) (6-8-S09)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS AND REGULATIONS

- [National Incident Management System](#) (DHS, FEMA).
- [Animal Health Resources](#), Typed Resource Definitions (FEMA).
- [Incident Command System](#) (DHS, FEMA).
- [ICS Forms/Job Aids, Tools and Templates](#) from the [ICS Resource Center](#) (FEMA).
- [ICS Forms](#), fillable in MSWord (FEMA EMI).
- [Animal Welfare Code](#) (7 USC Chapter 54), "Transportation, Sale, and Handling of Certain Animals" (USDA, APHIS).

[Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters](#) and [Animals in Public Evacuation Centers](#) (CDC).  
[Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings](#) (NASPHV).  
[Animals in Disasters](#) (NIH DIMRC).

**See also:**

[Help for RI Cities and Towns in Preparing for Emergency Animal Care](#) and [Advice for Animal Owners Facing a Disaster](#) (RI DEM).  
[Animal Disaster / Animal Care Plan](#), Section 6-8 in the RI DEM [Emergency Response Plan](#) (ERP).  
*State of Rhode Island Emergency Operations Plan*, especially “Annex VI: Emergency Support Function 6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services” (RIEMA).  
[State of Rhode Island Regional Disaster Shelters Coordination Plan](#) (RIEMA and ARC).

## PURPOSE

Emergency animal care is designed to meet the needs of domestic animals and their owners in a disaster.

Pet owners are responsible for their own animals, and they should be prepared to continue care for them, even in emergencies such as a hurricane evacuation. Commercial operations such as farms, boarding kennels, and breeders can be expected to provide for their animals under extreme conditions, as well. Preparedness is simply due diligence. For wildlife, both the struggle for survival and natural disasters are normal.

Still, there will be occasions when assistance, such as emergency pet sheltering, is needed. Emergencies may come without warning, when owner’s preparations are inadequate, or when individuals, private boarding facilities (e.g., pet-friendly hotels, kennels, or animal hospitals) and local animal control are overwhelmed.

In compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), emergency animal sheltering is managed through the Incident Command System. Response to a Local animal-care emergencies is the responsibility of animal owners, with the support of Local Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and local pounds and shelters, as needed. Before, during and after a State animal-care emergency, the Animal Response Team Leader may activate Rhode Island State Emergency Pet Shelters (RISEPS) to provide back-up care for pets (dogs and cats). RISEPS may also support rescue, triage, and/or transport to veterinary clinics or alternate boarding facilities in a State emergency.

This Guide is intended to counsel the best possible emergency animal sheltering operations in Rhode Island – in existing facilities as well as those under development to co-locate pet and human care in a disaster.

## PRIORITIES

1. Protect the health and safety of staff, clients, and visitors.
2. Protect animals. These include:
  - Household pets – dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, small mammals (gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits, potbelly pigs), reptiles, fish, arachnids.  
Note: Service animals such as guide dogs (not pets but animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities) can stay with their owners in shelters managed by the American Red Cross; so they will generally not require sheltering in an emergency pet shelter.  
For clarification by the US Department of Justice and the National Association of Attorneys General, see [Service Animals](#) and [Commonly Asked Questions about Service Animals in Places of Business](#).
  - Farm livestock. Note: Large animals such as horses, cattle, mules, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas, and emus should be sheltered in separate locations identified and pre-arranged by their owners.
  - Animals that are not allowed in emergency shelters include wild or feral animals, poisonous snakes or reptiles, and endangered or threatened species.
3. Protect property that is critical to shelter operations.
4. Protect the environment.

## SERVICES THAT EMERGENCY PET SHELTERS MAY PROVIDE

- Help owners to evacuate their animals from the site of an emergency.
- Organize temporary animal shelters for response and recovery.
- Provide animal care in shelters.
- Triage emergency animal care.
- Recruit and organize rescue teams.
- Keep records of animal identification, ownership, and care.
- Reunite animals with owners.

## INCIDENT SEVERITY AND RESPONSE LEVELS

An incident can be considered an animal-care emergency when conditions pose a threat to animals and an appropriate response exceeds the capacity of Local Animal Control. Such an incident could accompany a catastrophic flood, fire, hurricane, blizzard, drought, release of hazardous material, power outage, or evacuation of a damaged, unsafe, or inhumane facility.

In general, emergency response should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the hazards that an incident brings. The greater the threat to the environment and public safety and welfare, the larger and more urgent the response.

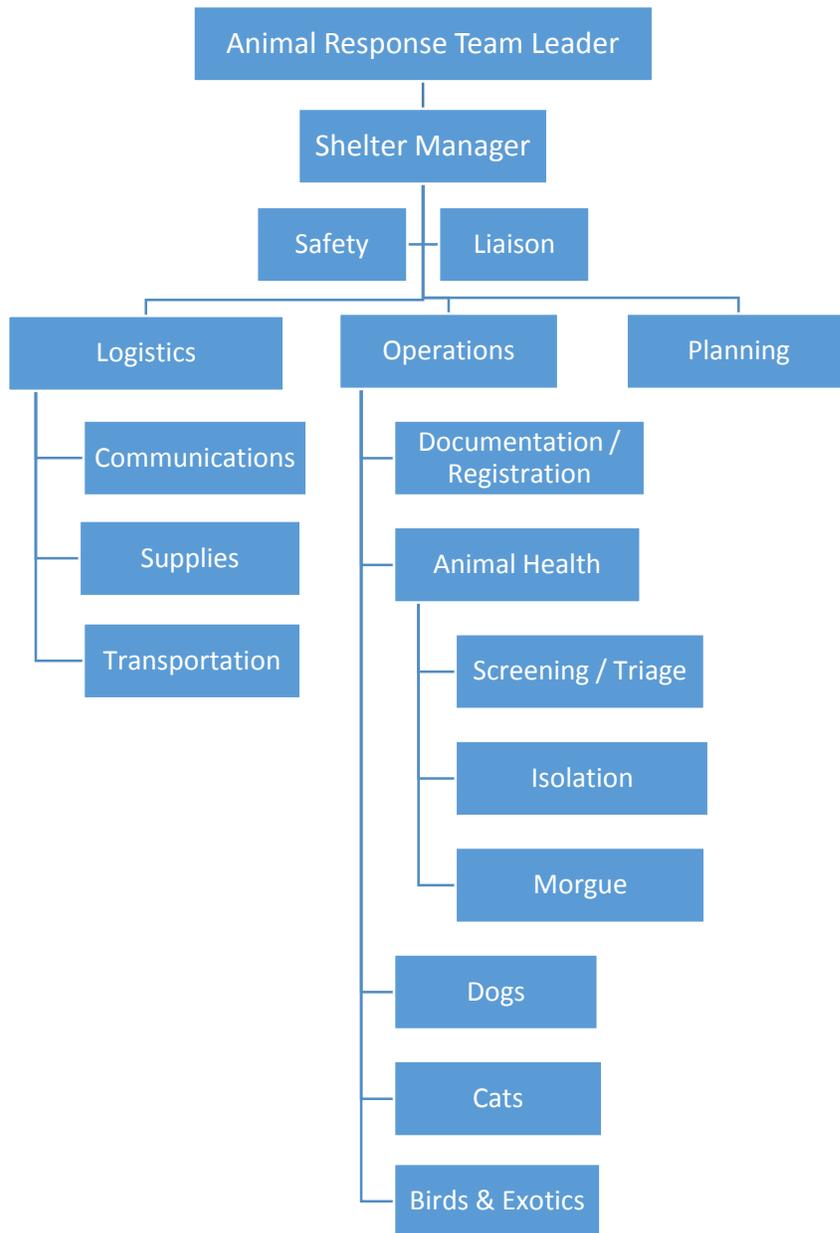
Incident severity is often ranked from 1 to 3 or 4, with a “Level 1” incident considered minor and a “Level 4” severe. Thresholds depend on the specific hazards of an incident, but the response can be expected to increase proportionately:

- Level 1 (Minor) – Single source response, the first responder or Local On-Scene Coordinator (LOSC, normally the Animal Control Officer).

- Level 2 (Moderate) – Local On-Scene Coordinator plus mutual aid (e.g., by mutual aid agreement with Local Animal Control from neighboring towns and/or a select RISEPS facility).
- Level 3 (Major) – State engagement, plus or minus selected mutual aid resources (e.g., Animal Control Officers, staff or volunteers from support agencies or shelters in neighboring cities or towns).
- Level 4 (Severe) – State-level response, including potential activation of the Rhode Island State Emergency Pet Shelters by the State Veterinarian.

## ORGANIZATION

Insofar as possible, responsibility and authority for emergency pet shelters should be organized as follows:



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Animal Owners

Insofar as possible, owners should care for their own animals in a shelter, under supervision of shelter staff. Shelter Managers or their designees will normally require the following:

- Only animals that are prepared – healthy, properly identified and vaccinated, manageable, and restrained (in a crate or cage and on a leash) – will be admitted to the emergency pet shelter.
- Owners are responsible for providing food, water, sanitation, and hands-on care during approved visiting hours.
- Owners are responsible for providing and administering all medications. (Medications generally will not be kept with the animal.)
- Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. Whether outdoors or indoors, owners should gather and dispose of pet waste and keep crates clean.

See also the [Pet Owner Sheltering Agreement](#).

*The Shelter Manager reserves the right to supervise owners' visits and to refuse animals that appear to be aggressive or in poor health.*

### Volunteers in an Emergency Pet Shelter

#### Enrollment

All volunteers should be formally enrolled with the facility. Recommended requirements include:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Submit a complete application, including information on response readiness, training, and health status.
- Pass a background check.
- Sign a pledge to follow a Code of Conduct.
- Maintain a current tetanus vaccination.  
(Rabies vaccination may not be generally required, but it is recommended for volunteers who may interact with aggressive or quarantined animals.)

#### Training

Volunteers should be encouraged to learn as much as they can about animal-care, disasters, and incident management. Among the recommended courses for emergency pet shelter personnel are:

- [Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness](#) (IS-10.A, 3-4 hrs. on-line)
- [Introduction to CERT](#) (IS-317, 6-8 hrs. on-line)\*
- [Pet First Aid](#) (ARC, 2-4 hrs., class-room based)
- Shelter Fundamentals (ARC, 2-4 hrs., class-room based)
- Psychological First-Aid (ARC, 2-4 hrs., class-room based)
- [CERT Basic Training](#) (CERT, 20 hrs., class-room based)\*
- [Animal Response Module 1](#) (CERT, 2-4 hrs., class-room based)
- [Animal Response Module 2](#) (CERT, 2-4 hrs., class-room based)

- [Livestock in Disasters](#) (FEMA, IS-111.a, 3.5 hrs. on-line)
- [Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS-100](#) (FEMA, IS-100.b, 3 hrs on-line)\*
- [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\) An Introduction](#) (FEMA, IS-700.a, 3 hrs. on-line)\*
- Other courses in the FEMA [Independent Study Program](#) (EMI ISP, on-line)

### Code of Conduct

The emergency pet shelter reserves the right to deny enrollment to applicants whose official record (arrests, violations of vehicle or vessel operator licenses, and outstanding warrants) raises doubts about their dependability, especially if that record includes a felony, substance abuse, violence, or neglect of people or animals. Supervisors have the authority to immediately deactivate any volunteer for behavior that is contrary to the following:

- Volunteers shall report to and remain in contact with the appropriate supervising authority and confine their activities to the stated mission and directives of the Incident Action Plan.
- Volunteers must not self-deploy. Authorization by the Animal Response Team Leader is required.
- Volunteers shall identify any assignments that are beyond their capabilities and notify their supervising authority of this limitation.
- While representing the emergency pet shelter, volunteers will not advocate or otherwise promote positions – political, religious, organizational, financial, or ideological – that are not in conformity with the official position of the facility.
- While on-site for a disaster response, all volunteers should display their current identification, preferably a facility identification vest and badge.
- While participating in any shelter-related activities, volunteers shall project a professional manner and appearance. In particular, the following will not be tolerated:
  - Violation of any laws,
  - Consumption of alcoholic beverages or possession, use, or selling of any illegal drugs,
  - Illegal use or display of a firearm,
  - Public outbursts or derogatory remarks about other organizations or volunteers.
- Volunteers shall observe all safety rules and regulations and shall know and follow instructions for proper use of equipment.
- Volunteers must not use or authorize the use of the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the emergency pet shelter, except in conformance with facility policy. Information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with the facility is confidential and can be disclosed or used only with the expressed authorization of the facility.
- Volunteers must in no way influence the conduct of the emergency pet shelter so as to confer financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation. Volunteers shall not accept or seek on behalf of anyone else, any financial advantage or gain, other than the nominal value of affiliation with the facility.

- Volunteers who suspect a conflict of interest (e.g., between an assignment in the emergency pet shelter and their own personal, professional, or financial interest) shall disclose such potential conflict to the facility point of contact upon becoming aware of it. The individual should absent him or herself during deliberations and refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.
- Volunteers shall not accept personal gratuities. All offers of donations shall be directed to an officer of the emergency pet shelter.
- Volunteers shall not enter private property to perform animal-care duties without verbal permission from the owner and a supervising authority or without a law-enforcement escort.
- Volunteers will be required to document or participate in documentation for each rescue in a timely manner, and submit documentation to a supervising authority.
- Volunteers shall transport animals only to facilities that have been designated by the appropriate supervising authority.
- Volunteers shall refrain from taking photographs of people without their written permission. Any photos that are taken will not be used for public display without written permission of the owner.
- In situations in which an animal(s) is rescued and transported from a property without prior permission of the animal's owner, the rescuer should leave readily visible, written notification of the removal on the property.

#### Common Tasks of Volunteers

1. Prepare personal/home matters, including care for dependents and necessary supplies for the duration of activation.
2. Bring at least a 3-day supply of food, drinking water, clothes, medication, bedding (sleeping bag, pad, and pillow), toiletries, rain gear, and other day-to-day necessities. Do not wear shorts, open-toed shoes, or orange outer garments in the shelter.
3. Report to the assigned location (e.g., command post, information center, staging area).
4. Report to your immediate supervisor.
5. Ensure that the arrival time and location are properly recorded.
6. Obtain a situation briefing and assignment.
7. Acquire necessary approvals (e.g., for field deployment), material and forms, supplies, and safety gear and procedures.
8. Stick with your assignment until you are reassigned or replaced. Any job left unattended can interrupt the integrity of shelter operations as a whole.
9. Do not talk to reporters or other members of the news media yourself. Instead, direct press to the Public Information Officer (PIO). Only the PIO speaks to the media. If you are not sure who the PIO is, refer inquirers to your supervisor.
10. Identify and brief subordinates on the situation, incident organization, safety, reporting relationship, and duties.
11. Maintain a personal log of activities and hours worked, using appropriate administrative forms.
12. Brief your supervisor on activities during your deployment.
13. Ensure that your exit or demobilization is properly recorded.

***Be careful!***

*Good faith and due diligence are required.  
Volunteers cannot be spared liability for their own reckless or willful misconduct.*

***Be safe!***

*Above all, avoid putting yourself or others in danger.*

**Safety**

Safety is the responsibility of all response personnel to apply and to monitor. Field work should not be undertaken unless all the following conditions are met:

- A supervisor is aware of your present location and activities.
- Response activities being undertaken are those assigned.
- You are qualified and competent to undertake response duties and associated activities (e.g., operate a boat, pump, vehicle, generator, etc.)
- Conditions are safe, and your activities do not put yourself and others at risk.
- One or more team members or volunteers are present to provide assistance if you are injured or in trouble. In other words, you should never work alone. Two is the minimum number of people to be present whenever contact with an animal is possible.
- Location of first aid supplies is known and readily available.
- A qualified first-aid or medical attendant is known and readily available.
- Radio or line communications are fully functional to seek medical or rescue assistance.
- Transportation to a medical station is available.
- Activities under your supervision or by others do not pose a risk to you or your team members.

Cease activities and report immediately to a supervisor if any one of the above conditions is not present.

***When in doubt . . . stop and ask. Report all accidents and injuries***

**Injuries**

Injuries to volunteers are to be reported to a supervisor immediately. The supervisor is to assess the extent of injuries. Each injury will be dealt with on an individual basis, and appropriate action should be taken.

**Stress**

Disaster work can be a unique, rewarding, and demanding experience. Under tough conditions people get to know one another quickly. Emergency responders often become like a family, working, eating, in effect, living together. They share a sense of adventure and excitement as well as a purpose. Whatever the stresses of normal everyday life, they become more intense during disasters.

Among the common symptoms of stress are headaches, upset stomach, diarrhea, or poor concentration, feelings of irritability and restlessness. You may become tired of the disaster, of talking or even thinking about it. You may

want a break from coworkers and victims or just time to be alone. You may feel frustrated or guilty because you miss your family but are unavailable to them physically or emotionally, due to your focus on the disaster, fatigue, or the like. Phone calls home can be rewarding but also frustrating. You may feel your family and friends simply cannot understand what you're going through. If they become irritated, it can compound the problem, and a sense of isolation and estrangement can follow.

It is the responsibility of every emergency responder to check workmates for such signs of work-related stress. Report any such signs to a supervisor as soon as possible.

The supervisor should immediately talk to that volunteer: "What are you feeling?" "What do you need?" The supervisor may ask coworkers what they have noticed. Consult other Staff for their opinions: should the volunteer continue in the current assignment, move to another assignment, or leave for the day? Discuss these options with the volunteer, and make a decision based on what is best for the volunteer. At the outset, it might be best to take at least a 15-minute break from the assignment.

There are many things you can do to manage such stress. When packing for the disaster, take a few mementos from home to make accommodations more personal and comfortable and to help you feel connected. Try to get regular exercise consistent with your physical condition away from the disaster scene. Try to do things that ordinarily help you relax, such as listening to music, running, reading a good book, or taking a hot bath. Get enough sleep, and try to eat regularly even if you're not hungry. Try to avoid foods high in sugar, fats and sodium, such as donuts and fast foods. To be sure your body is getting the nutrients it needs, consider vitamins or mineral supplements. Avoid excessive use of alcohol and coffee. (Caffeine is a stimulant and should also be used in moderation, since it affects the nervous system, making you feel edgy.)

Although you need time alone on long disaster operations, you should also spend time with co-workers, particularly if you are a newcomer to disaster work. Arrange respite time, sometimes with co-workers, away from the disaster scene. You will probably find others who enjoy similar activities and who are interested in doing things together (e.g., a movie, dinner, volleyball, a picnic). Humor helps ease the tension, but use it carefully. The nerves of victims and co-workers may be raw. Feelings may be easily hurt, especially if they are the brunt of "disaster humor." So, it is important both to recognize that things, even in an emergency, can be funny but also to express that recognition discreetly, with respect for others who might disagree.

When on the job, it is important to take breaks, especially if you find yourself making mistakes, getting short with people, or unable to concentrate. Stay in touch with family and friends back home. Write or call. Sharing your stories and feelings with them and listening to theirs helps prevent the sense of being a stranger when you return home.

*Remember: Volunteers work as a team.  
Taking care of each other is part of the job.*

### Animal Response Team Leader

(In Level 1-3, the leader is the Local ACO, in consultation with Shelter Managers; in Level 4, the leader is the State Veterinarian)

- Reports to Incident Command.
- Oversees threat assessment and evaluation of emergency response capabilities.
- Coordinates local Animal Control, Shelter Management, and support of outside agencies.
- Appoints core team members and backups.
- Coordinates local planning, training, and drills.
- Requests or provides additional resources from/to support agencies, appropriate for the incident severity level.
- If the span of control is too large (e.g., more than 4-6 Shelter Managers), delegates oversight to a Shelter Coordinator.
- Works with Shelter Managers to coordinate tracking and returning animals to their owners or, if unclaimed, to proper authorities.
- Reviews the incident with Shelter Managers.
- Ensures that problems arising from the incident are addressed, resolved and properly recorded.
- Coordinates information gathering and dissemination with the Public Information Officer (PIO) for the shelters.
- Submits an incident report.

*Only Public Information Officers are authorized to speak with the press.  
Direct all general inquiries to the PIO or your supervisor.*

### Shelter Manager

- Responsible for overall management and on-site operations of the emergency pet shelter.
- Reports to the Animal Response Team Leader.
- Designates a backup Shelter Manager.
- Has authority to establish procedures, to approve exceptions to procedures, and, when appropriate, to dismiss volunteers and to refuse to accept animals.
- Initiates shelter operations.
- Ensures procedures are followed, with special attention to site safety.
- Alerts off-site members in the event of a threat to the shelter, such as medical-care or animal-control crises.
- Via Logistics, ensures an adequate level of supplies to the shelter, e.g., water, medical supplies, housekeeping, etc.
- Oversees individual assignments in consultation with staff. E.g., monitors check-in and check-out sheets to be sure that animals are receiving regular care at least twice per day.
- Maintains a log of active staff, volunteers, and their assignments.
- Assures proper procedure in the disposition of animals from the shelter.
  - Directs return of animals to their owners.
  - Arranges for proper disposition of unclaimed animals to appropriate foster and permanent placement agencies.
- Ensures that required forms and records are completed and maintained.
- Determines staff levels and supervises them.

- Coordinates with American Red Cross via the Liaison.
- Maintains an incident log.
- Supervises demobilization of the shelter.
  - Inventories all supplies (administrative, shelter, response kits, etc.) and arranges for restocking, as necessary.
  - Ensures that all shelters, carriers, cages, etc. are cleaned and put in proper order according to the facilities plan.
  - Meets with shelter workers to review the response.
- Submits a shelter report to the Incident Commander.

#### Liaison

- Maintains an up-to-date list of contact information for shelter stakeholders.
- Serves as the point of contact for the incident Public Information Officer (PIO) or the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- With authority from the Animal Response Team Leader or a designee, notifies facility staff and volunteers of activation.
- Contacts volunteers and schedules staff.
- Coordinates procurement and delivery of supplies.
- Coordinates with the human shelters via the American Red Cross.
- Participates in shelter management meetings or briefings to monitor response status.
- Coordinates with other agencies (humane societies, rescue groups, animal control, veterinarians, boarding kennels, groomers, etc.)
- Maintains log of contacts.

#### Operations

- Directs staff so that sheltered animals receive:
  - Safe shelter,
  - Food and water,
  - Medical care as needed,
  - 24-hour observation,
  - Exercise as directed by veterinarian,
  - Grooming as needed.
- Establishes a data recording and management system.
- Delegates work assignments.
- Ensures each animal has proper identification and paperwork.
- Checks in and assigns each incoming cage or designated holding area.
  - Assigns responsibilities for exercise schedule, feeding, care, grooming, observation and tracking progress of animals.
  - Supervises all workers.
  - Ensures all supplies are on hand.
  - Schedules work hours for the remainder of the incident.
  - Checks the credentials of all people coming into the shelter.
  - Reports to Animal Health and coordinates all medical care in the shelter.
  - Ensures proper filing of all forms at shelter.
- Registers evacuees and their animals with appropriate forms
  - Performs animal intake and health assessment.
  - Makes and files a photo of each animal with its owner.

- Assigns animal to a crate and properly labels the crate with owner identification. (Animals without collars must receive only one ID tag, attached to the outside of the crate or cage.)
- Maintains a file of all animals currently in the shelter
- Assists owners when they come to walk / feed / care for their pet. During visiting hours, owners check-in and wait for their pet to be brought to a registration or exercise area for the owner to perform routine care.
- Notifies the Shelter Manager when owners are not caring for their pets on a regular schedule
- Coordinates with a veterinarian, as needed, to deal with pet health-care issues.
- Walks / feeds pets whose owners are unknown or who are otherwise unable to provide adequate care.
- Monitors animals for stress / behavior problems.
- Monitors supplies, food and environmental conditions.
- Assists in breaking-down and cleaning of the shelter and its equipment.

#### Safety Officer

- Inspects the facilities to identify potential hazards for staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- Halts any activity in the shelter that poses significant health and safety risks.
- Instructs staff and volunteers to reduce exposure to health and safety hazards.
- Oversees the selection and use of proper personal protection equipment (PPE) and supplies (vaccines, hand sanitizers, etc.) for operations.
- Oversees the maintenance of pure water and food on-site.
- Recommends appropriate vaccinations, and biosecurity measures for operations.
- Defines first-aid supplies to be carried by staff and volunteers.
- Oversees proper treatment or referral of injuries and illness among staff, volunteers and visitors while on-site.

#### Planning

- Maintains and recommends updates in the facility operations manual.
- Maintains a record of needs and resources.
- Maintains a list of volunteers, their skills, vehicles, equipment and special needs.
- Coordinates with the Shelter Manager to plan for the number of volunteers needed, according to the number of pets in the Shelter.
- Develops and distributes the Incident Action Plan and pertinent information to relevant staff.
- Works with Operations and Logistics to keep abreast of incident conditions, especially as they affect staffing needs for upcoming shifts.
- Communicates situation reports to the Shelter Manager to plan for the next operational period.
- Provides input to the incident status report.
- Reviews and recommends improvements in the facility operations manual.

#### Logistics

- Makes and posts signage in each area of the shelter to direct traffic of visitors, volunteers, and staff.
- Oversees acquisition, storage, and distribution of supplies and equipment.
- Coordinates with the nearest ARC Shelter Manager for location of trash disposal, pet walking areas, and needs (food, water, rest) of activated volunteers and staff.

- Inventories facility space and notes present conditions.
- Configures space in the facility.
  - Identifies a kennel area, ideally at least two well-separated parts, one for dogs and one for cats. Insofar as possible, separate males and females. Animals from the same family may be housed together, if the owner approves, and if there is adequate space for each animal.
  - Identifies an area for very small animals: rabbits, gerbils, hamsters and “pocket pets.”
  - Identifies an Isolation Area for injured, sick or pregnant animals.
  - Identifies a Morgue, which needs to be separated from all other areas, and should have chairs and privacy. The sign for this area should read “AREA TWO” (rather than “MORGUE.”)
  - Identifies areas for non-medical and medical supplies, including a lock box for regulated pharmaceuticals.
- Ensures emergency supplies are properly stocked.
  - Sets up trash cans, fans, plastic sheeting, crates and supplies.
  - Ensures adequate supplies of crates, food, plastic bags, disinfectant, etc.
- Coordinates with the Liaison for special supply needs.
- Oversees shelter cleanup and conducts a final check of supplies, equipment, and the area.

#### Communications

- Keeps a list of communications contacts.
- Identifies appropriate communications media (radio, cell phone, etc.) for the facility to ensure staff and volunteers can communicate with one another.
- Maintains and tracks on-site communications equipment.
- Serves as the point of contact for support agencies (e.g., suppliers, animal ambulance).
- Coordinates compliance with communications regulations and protocols.
- Maintains maps and contingency evacuation routes.
- During demobilization, reassembles, inventories, and maintains communications equipment.
- Submits summary report.

#### Animal Health

- Identifies a Medical Staff person on-duty and/or a veterinarian on-call.
- Recruits, and approves staff or volunteers who are qualified and willing to provide an appropriate level of veterinary medical support.
  - Develops credential or training requirements.
  - Advises the safety officer on personal protection equipment and supplies (vaccines, hand sanitizers, etc.) for team members.
  - Advises the safety officer on water and food contamination, vaccinations, and biosecurity measures.
- Defines animal first-aid supplies to be carried by staff and volunteers
- Identifies materials and assesses shelter layout for the prevention and control of animal disease.
- Makes shelter inspections to preserve the health, safety and wellbeing of animals.
- Makes on-site recommendations, as needed, to change the Response Level.
- Administers animal medical care on-site and at the shelter, with emphasis on biosecurity, triage, isolation, and the morgue.

- Supervises maintenance of medical records.
- Oversees proper handling and appropriate records of controlled substances.
- Performs or supervises triage for animal intake and release.
- Advises the Shelter Manager on medical and non-medical evacuation requirements.
- Decides if animals should be transported to off-site medical facilities.
- Oversees medical documentation.
- Provides care and medical instructions on released animals as required.
- Reviews medical supplies and equipment for restocking.
- Provides to the Shelter Manager an incident summary with recommendations for improvements.

#### Transportation

- Develops transportation procedures for the Shelter, particularly for intake and discharge of animals and supplies.
- Ensures proper animal transportation is provided from the shelter.
- Inspects transport vehicles.
- Works with Communications when alternate routes are required or unforeseen incidents involving traffic, equipment or animal emergencies en route.
- Provides input to incident review report.
- Reviews volunteer requirements and ensures the call list is up-to-date.

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Inspect Facility

Prior to using a facility as an emergency pet shelter, a staff member will inspect the site and assess its condition, making note of equipment, furniture or materials present as well as the integrity and cleanliness of the site. The facility should at least have:

- Operational water, sewer, and power,
- Adequate lighting and ventilation,
- Unobstructed entrance and exit, including emergency exits,
- A secure perimeter,
- Functional restrooms,
- Non-carpeted floors in areas for animals.

See also [Developing a Site for Emergency Animal Care](#).

### Configure Space in the Facility

The facility must be safe and accessible, however entry is also restricted, requiring check-in and check-out at the registration/intake area.

*Kennel areas are off-limits to the general public and should be secure at all times.*

### Set Up a Facility Command Post

The Command Post should be maintained in a separate and secure space that is also close to shelter operations.

- Close off the command post and shelter areas to the public.
- Set up communications and a secure records storage system.

- Designate a Registration Area where disaster victims may bring their animals and request animal first-aid or shelter.
- Check that Kennel Areas are properly set up and staffed.
- Ensure that a Supply Area for carriers/cages is open and available.
- Ensure Supply Area stocked and available under strict supervision
- Secure all areas. Doors may be locked at night, but when animals are in residence, the facility should never be left unattended. At least two (2) staff or volunteers should be present at all times.
- Immediately communicate medical emergencies which may arise after transportation of animals to the shelter.

#### Post Signs

- Clearly mark all doors to the area as a “Emergency Pet Shelter”.
- Clearly mark one (1) door for “Animal Intake.”
- Post facility policies and procedures for pet care and feeding.
- Designate and clearly post a “dog walk” or exercise area.

#### Establish a Registration and Intake Area

*The Registration Area authorizes – monitors, controls, and records – the movement of all people and animals into and out of the facility.*

- Establish and maintain a check-in point and log for shelter personnel.
  - Shelter staff and volunteers should log in as soon as they arrive and log out when they leave.
  - Each, logged-in staff member or volunteer should be issued a shirt or vest, an assignment, and an identification card.
- Anyone who approaches the shelter -- including pet owners -- who is not a member of the facility staff or an enrolled, on-duty volunteer, should be directed to request a “VISITOR” badge at the Registration Area. Anyone who is not so authorized to enter should be directed to leave.

*Every effort should be made to have all forms filled out and signed by both the owner and an authorized representative of the facility before the shelter takes custody of the animal.*

*All animals should be processed through the Registration Area, unless there is a medical emergency, in which case the animal should go directly to the Isolation Area.*

- Designate a space for an appropriate volunteer or staff member to fill out the animal intake forms and do a health assessment on the animal.
  - Provide a table for owner and pet registration, including a photo of the animal with its owner. (To ease stress on the animals, owners, and staff, it may help to make the photographs outside the registration area, e.g., in the parking area or a short distance from where owners and pets may be lining up.)
- Implement an orderly animal intake procedure:
  - Introduce yourself to the animal’s owner.
  - Explain how the emergency pet shelter can help, but be brief.
  - Give the owner a copy of the Pet Owner Rules to keep.

- Ask the owner to complete a Release Form. Use one form for each animal.
- Ask the owner to provide proof of vaccinations (such as shot records or rabies tag), to be noted on the registration and intake forms. Note: It is understandable that during a disaster or evacuations, some pet owners may have lost such proof, but through the registration form, the pet owner must accept the risks of boarding that pet in a shelter.
- Each animal should have an ID tag, identified with:
  1. A unique shelter number, consisting of the name of the shelter followed by a three digit number. (E.g. XShelter-001, XShelter-002, XShelter-003, etc; or YShelter-001, YShelter-002, etc. If more than one person is checking-in animals, it may be useful to have the second person start counting at -500, -501, -502, etc.)

Plus, when available:

  2. The animal's name;
  3. The owner's last name, confirmed with a photo ID;
  4. An owner's ID #, either the last five digits of a driver's license or a documented birth date (mm/dd/yy).

Hence, for example, if Jane Doe, born on July 28, 2014, checks in the 24<sup>th</sup> dog at X Shelter, and its name is Spot, the ID should read: "XShelter-024 Spot Doe 07/28/14." If Spot is an anonymous rescue, with no known owner yet, its ID would simply read "XShelter-024."
- Emphasize the importance of working together to maintain an unbroken, documented chain-of-custody. For example, if the owner designates someone else to pick up the pet, that designation should be presented to the shelter in writing, and the designee will be required to provide the owner's ID# number as well as personal identification at the time of pick up.
- Assign the animal to an appropriately sized crate or cage. It must be large enough for the animal to stand up and turn around. Ensure that water as well as a towel or bedding are provided. Immediately label the crate with the owner's name and the pet's name, along with any special needs.
- When owners bring their own crates, note that fact on the intake form, make sure they are clearly labeled with the owners' names, and place the crates in an appropriate area.
- Keep all leashes, collars, food bowls, toys or bedding that the owner provides with the animal, either inside the crate or directly on top of it.
- Put all paperwork in a plastic pouch that stays with the animal until it is returned to the owner.
- It may be calming to drape the crate with a sheet or other light fabric. A covered crate and dimmed light, as in a den, can reduce the animal's exposure to distractions and increase its sense of security.

*Note: The emergency pet shelter may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive.*

- The facility may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive. At a minimum, aggressive animals must be securely contained, and the owner will be responsible for its care and feeding. If the owner does not have a muzzle, provide one for the duration of the stay in the shelter.
- Designate a space for an appropriate member of shelter staff or volunteer to log owners and animals in and out for daily care during visiting hours.
  - Twice each day, under shelter supervision, owners may be responsible for routine animal care (feeding, watering, exercising, cleaning, etc.).
  - At the discretion of the Shelter Manager (e.g., depending on the demand) visits may be staggered. For example:
    - Owner's last name beginning with letters A through L  
– 8:00 to 8:20 AM and 5:00 to 5:20 PM.
    - Owner's last name beginning with letters M through Z  
– 8:40 to 9:00 AM and 5:40 to 6:00 PM.

#### Establish Kennel Areas

*Aim to separate species (dogs / cats / others)  
as well as animals that have special needs or that are sick or are aggressive.*

#### All Areas

- Animals are to be housed in separate cages/stalls in areas separated by types of animals (dogs, cats, small animals, and "Area 2" or morgue). Insofar as possible, male and female animals should also be separated. There should be adequate space between the animals of opposite sexes, even if they are caged.
- All animals should have a facility ID tag and proper paperwork.
- All animals should be monitored every 15 minutes for the first hour in the shelter. Look for signs of stress, illness or injuries, and report them to the medical staff immediately.
- Animals will not be fed the first hour they are in the kennel. Water should be available at all times, unless Animal Health decides otherwise.
- Accurate records must be kept for each animal. After the first hour, animals are checked hourly. [Animal Daily Care](#) records should be completed accordingly.

*Whenever possible, pet owners will feed, walk, and care for their own animals.  
The exception will be animals whose owners are unknown or who are staying at other  
ARC shelters and cannot travel to visit their animals.*

- Animals must be fed at least once a day and walked at least twice a day. The Shelter Manager may require pet owners who fail to perform this minimum care or to use proper restraints (e.g., crated or leashed at all times) to remove their animals from the shelter.
- Any animal taken out for a walk must be signed out to the rightful owner and leashed. There should be no exceptions.
- Only pet owners and facility staff or activated volunteers may remove animals from crates. Children should not be allowed to enter the shelter.
- Unless needs dictate, owners are responsible for administering all medications to pets. They should keep a record of these medications.

- Pets in the shelter should not have contact with other pets.
- Each crate or kennel must be cleaned and disinfected before being used by another animal. All food and water bowls must be cleaned and disinfected and new bedding provided for the next animal.
- If an animal escapes from its cage or a designated area, it should be captured immediately. If an animal escapes, call an “All Hands Alert” by announcing very loudly “Dog out!” or “Cat Out!” or the like. Facility staff and volunteers are to respond immediately when this announcement is made.
- An “All Hands Alert” may also be issued if someone is being attacked or bitten. The announcement for that is “Help.”
- The Communications Coordinator is to be notified immediately if a volunteer is bitten, attacked or seriously injured in order to notify appropriate staff. Facility staff will make the proper notifications (normally the Department of Health) and determine if outside assistance should be requested. (See [Who to Call When a Potential Rabies Exposure Occurs.](#))
- All animals should be in their crates and kennel areas closed to visitors for quiet time from 9 PM to 7 AM.

#### Dog Area

- If space permits, crates or kennels should be twelve (12) inches or more apart.
- Crates should be oriented to keep animals facing away from each other.
- Provide food and water bowls, identification tag, leash, and bedding for each crate.
- For dogs sensitive to noise, activity or other dogs, provide a sheet to keep the sides of the crate covered.
- The dog area should be close to an exit door to facilitate reaching dog walk areas. Provide all owners with plastic bags for clean-up each time they walk their dog.
- If necessary because of weather or dangerous conditions, a dog walk area can be created indoors in a separate room. Assign a volunteer specifically to maintain this area.
- Staff or volunteers should perform regular “poop-patrol” walks to ensure animal owners have cleaned up the Dog Walk area.
- Provide separate isolation areas for dogs that are sick and for those without proof of vaccination.
- Dogs that are seriously ill or pose a health risk to others should be transported to a local veterinary facility as soon as possible. Contact the on-call veterinarian for assistance.
- Insofar as possible, isolate dogs that are in heat.

#### Cat Area

- Cats should be kept in a separate area from dogs, in the quietest part of the area away from doors and other activity.
- Cats that are sick or without proof of vaccination should be kept separate.
- Provide food and water bowls, identification tag, and bedding for each crate.
- Provide kitty litter boxes in an area where owners can take their cats out of the crates for exercise and / or feeding, or provide a litter box inside the crate. Litter boxes should be cleaned (scooped) regularly.
- Isolate cats that are in heat.

## Birds

- Designate an area for birds away from drafts and temperate extremes.
- All birds must be in fully ventilated cages. Provide food, water, identification tag, and newspaper for all cages.
- Insofar as possible, ask Animal Health to identify a volunteer with bird expertise to assess the bird and the best possible bird area location.
- Whenever possible, birds should be transported in their “home” cage.
- When necessary, cages may accommodate up to three (3) birds if the birds are socialized, free of disease, and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide a sheet to cover the birdcage to deter noise, and cover at night.

## Ferrets

- By RI law, ferrets require a permit from Fish and Wildlife and must be current in rabies vaccinations.
- Cages may house up to three (3) ferrets if they are socialized, free of disease, and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide food, water, identification tag, and bedding for each cage.
- Cages must be of sturdy construction, chew-proof, and deep enough to allow for appropriate bedding.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

## Small Mammals

- All small mammals are to be kept caged at all times.
- Provide food, water, identification tag, and bedding for each cage.
- Cages must provide ample mobility and be well ventilated.
- Cages or containers must be chew-proof.
- Provide odor-inhibiting bedding material such as wood chips or shredded paper.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

## Reptiles

- Reptiles should be kept in a separate area from other animals.
- Locate reptile area near electrical outlets for portable heaters or special lighting.
- Reptile cages should be cleaned daily to prevent risk of salmonella.
- Provide each cage with food, water, identification tag, and bedding if required.

## Arachnids

- If possible, locate arachnids away from other animals.
- Provide water and identification tag for each cage.
- The owner should be responsible for feeding and providing any bedding or natural materials (twigs, grass) required.

## Housing Animals Off-site

*No matter where they are sheltered,  
from the moment animals are registered until reclaimed by their owners,  
they remain in custody of the emergency pet shelter.*

Important things to remember for volunteers taking an animal, or when animals must be moved to another location for any reason:

- Facility staff or volunteers may be given first opportunity to board these animals.
- Distribution of animals should be based on how much a volunteer is willing and able to care for the particular animal.
- All efforts should be made to keep pets from the same households together.
- Arrangements for transport of any animal in the care of the emergency pet shelter to another location should be reviewed and approved by facility staff.
- No animal is to be moved without proper handling apparel/equipment.
- Facility paperwork as well as the animal's ID Tag must move with the animal.
- While in the care of the emergency pet shelter, all animals should be monitored on a daily basis, and records kept, just as they would be at the shelter. Insofar as possible and welcomed by the owner, volunteers should have regular contact with the animal's owner and allow visits. Animals can be claimed by the owner directly from the volunteer, using the same procedure as stated in the section "Disposition of Animals during Recovery." When it is time for an owner to claim the animal(s), the owner will be notified and requested to make arrangements with facility staff or volunteers responsible for that animal. It is the responsibility of the owner to pick up the animal and complete the discharge form.

Important things to remember when outside facilities are taking animals:

- Only outside facilities approved by the emergency pet shelter will be used.
  - Outside facilities should allow the emergency pet shelter to have ready access to the premises.
  - A representative of the emergency pet shelter should be assigned to monitor any outside facility used.
  - Outside facilities must follow facility rules and regulations regarding handling and housing of animals.
  - Outside facilities should allow owners to visit their pets.
  - Outside facilities should instruct their personnel to keep accurate records.
- Every effort will be made to abide by the requirements of the outside facility.
- Owners may claim their pets directly from the outside facility, using the same procedures as stated in the section "Disposition of Animals during Recovery."
- Payment for charges incurred at the outside facility should be prearranged between the emergency pet shelter where the pet was first registered and the pet owner, before the pet is transferred to that facility.
- Unclaimed animals will be declared homeless and will be turned over to the local Animal Control Department, or an appropriate facility that accepts and adopts homeless animals.

#### Working Off-site

Rules of conduct while responding to an Incident in the field, outside the shelter:

- No staff member or volunteer is ever to work alone. Field crews should work in groups of no less than two (2). Larger groups may spilt up into smaller groups.
- Field crews going out more than a half mile from the facility Command Post should use at least one motor vehicle.
- Field crews should have appropriate attire for the type of incident.
- If crews encounter an injured animal, they need to make an assessment of the animal's condition, and call in for instructions immediately.
- No volunteers or staff are to talk to the media while on assignment, unless authorized in advance.

- No volunteer or staff member is to respond to a water rescue without coordination with Incident Command.

#### Animal Fatalities

*Unfortunately, animals may come to the shelter dead (DOA) or in critical condition, and they may die while in our care. These situations must be handled with the utmost care and concern for both the animal and the owner.*

- A dead animal will be described as a “CODE 2.” Avoid using the terms “Dead on arrival” or “morgue” when speaking to, or in the vicinity of, the general public. The morgue is to be described as “AREA 2.”
- Death of the animal must be noted in its [Animal Record](#).
- A dead animal will be taken to “Area 2” (morgue) for processing. No dead animal is to be left outside, or anywhere near the public areas in or around the facility. A Medical Staff person on duty must examine a dead animal. If there is no Medical Staff person on duty, the volunteer in charge of First Aid and one helper must examine the animal and declare it dead. If the animal has not been covered or put in a plastic bag, it needs to be. If clear plastic bags, or tarps/blankets to cover the body are available, they should be used, until the animal can be identified. The clear bags make it easier to see the coloring of the animal’s fur. For small animal boxes, cardboard carriers and coolers will be made available as well.
- After the DOA has been processed, and placed in the morgue, a Team Member needs to write a large number 2 in the upper right hand corner of the [Animal Record](#) to signify the death of the animal. If a Team Member believes that a certain DOA is a match, the Kennel Manager should be notified for further verification. If the DOA is a probable match, then, alerting all members in the registration area in case the owner shows up unexpectedly, proper precautions can be taken to assist the owner. All matches are “probable” until the owner confirms that the animal is their pet.

#### Notifying the Owner

- If there is a possible match (e.g., indicated by red dots on the [Animal Record](#)), then the owner will need to be contacted. Again, this is a very delicate matter and should be handled carefully. (The same type of message can be given to someone who is standing right there at the Registration table.)
- A sample message is “(Mrs. Jones), this is (your name), with the (name of your emergency pet shelter). We have a listing for your missing (dog, cat, etc.) We have received more animals since you were here, however, I need you to know that some of them are deceased.”
- Pause here, in case there is a response. Continue with “We have a (dog, cat, etc.) that is similar to your pet’s description. Are you able to come over for identification purposes, or are you able to designate someone to help you with this?”
- Depending on the answer, make notes on the back of the [Animal Record](#), as to what the client’s intentions are. It is hard to predict what will happen.
- Give people every opportunity to talk, cry, ask questions, or say nothing at all. Ask if there is anyone there with them. If not, ask if you can call someone for them. The person may come right over, or they may not. They may send someone else. (If they do, make sure that the person coming can positively identify the pet.)

*Express our/your condolences. A simple "I'm sorry for your loss" is often enough.*

- Clients arriving to identify DOAs, or clients who are about to learn that their pet did not survive, are to be taken to a special "private" section, in or near "Area 2," for the purpose of identifying the animal. Two staff or volunteers should be present to assist the owner. Anything can happen. The client may not be able to actually view the remains. While the client should never be forced to do this, someone has to make the identification. Use your own judgment. Some clients may want to spend some time with the pet. Some clients may want to touch or hold the pet. This is allowed. They may have as much time with the pet as they need. You should only leave if they request to be left alone.
- Information on pet bereavement should be offered to clients whose pet has died. Owners may not accept the offer at the time, but let them know that support is available on-line, if they want it later. Helpful sites include:
  - [Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement](#) (APLB).
  - [Coping with Pet Loss](#) (HelpGuide).
  - [Coping with the Death of Your Pet](#) (HSUS).
  - [Coping with the Loss of Pet](#) (AVMA).
  - [Pet Loss and Bereavement Information for Pet Owners](#) (UPenn)
  - [Pet Loss Support Hotlines and Helplines](#) (OSU)
  - [Pet Loss Support Page](#) with [Ten Tips on Coping With Pet Loss](#), also available as a [brochure](#) (Moira Anderson Allen).
  - [Pet Passages](#) (PetPassages).
  - [When Your Animal Dies: Understanding Your Feelings of Loss](#) (AVMF).

#### Disposal of Deceased Animals

- Some people will want to take the animal's body, while others will not. Some people will not have any idea what to do with the body.
- The animal's body may remain at the shelter only for a brief time, while the owner makes arrangements.
- The emergency pet shelter may be able to arrange for the town where the event happened to dispose of the body. However, this disposal option may be a group burial, and the owner should be made aware of this.
- The shelter can suggest local pet cemeteries and crematories, but the cost would be the responsibility of the owner.
- No matter what the owner decides, "Release of Deceased Animal to the Owner" must be written on the animal's [Animal Record](#), signed, and dated by the owner or his/her agent.
- The emergency pet shelter will arrange for disposal of all unclaimed animals

#### Thoughts for Staff and Volunteers

- This assignment will be the hardest, but most necessary, part of this entire program.
- The death of an animal is always difficult. It can be as hard on the team member as it is on the client. Do what you can to help.
- Be mindful of the possibility in a disaster that animal owners may have also recently lost family, friends, possessions, and homes.
- If at any time during this assignment, you should feel the need to remove yourself from the situation, tell someone immediately. Do not wait until you are overwhelmed. All of us understand, and we will do our best to help each other, as well as the clients and their pets.

## Disposition of Animals during Recovery

- Supervise the returning of animals to owner. When an owner comes to claim their animal(s), there is a strict procedure that needs to be followed. This procedure applies to not only the emergency pet shelter, but also to any outside facility we use. The procedure is as follows:

*We must safeguard against the wrong person taking a pet out of the shelter, and we must do all we can to give an owner only the correct animal.*

- To authorize a release, refer the owner to the Shelter Manager.
- The Shelter Manager checks to be sure the owner's personal identification matches owner/agent information on the [Animal Record](#).
- The Shelter Manager assigns a member of the staff or volunteer to find the animal and match up the two copies.
- The owner is asked to identify the animal as his or her own.
- The staff member or volunteers reviews the care given to the animal while in the emergency pet shelter and informs the owner actions that are required for follow-up care.
- If the animal is any type other than a dog or farm animal, it may only leave in some type of carrier or covered box (the shelter will try to provide this if necessary).
- The owner signs the [Animal Record](#).
- The animal is returned to the owner.
- All paperwork for the animal is stapled together and put in a special file for returned animals.

## Special Notes:

- If the holding facility is different than the emergency pet shelter, a Shelter Manager may be unavailable. The staff member or volunteer responsible for the animal will follow the same instructions as listed above.
- If someone other than the owner is there to claim the animal, check for a documented record from the owner regarding whom he or she has designated to claim the animal. If we do not have that record, every effort should be made to contact the owner before the animal can be released. In addition, the person claiming the animal must have personal identification and leave a phone number. If the Team Member has serious doubts about someone claiming an animal, a Staff Member is to be notified immediately, and a joint decision will be made.
- Initiate foster pet care personnel if necessary.
- Ensure medical records and medications go with animal.
- Ensure medical review and sign off by Animal Health.

## Contingencies for Threats to the Facility

### Assess the Threat

- Integrity of the structure (roof, walls, doors, windows);
- Utilities (ventilation, water/sewer, electricity/lights, telecommunications);
- Exterior features (parking lots, storage space, access);
- Site security.

When Threat to Health and Safety is Clear, Present or Imminent . . .

1. Immediately evacuate or shelter in-place, whichever would be safer. Protection of people is the top priority.
2. Contact local public safety services (fire and/or police).
3. Notify Animal Response Team Leader.
4. Remove animals if and only if they can be removed concurrently, without delaying or otherwise compromising human protection.

*Helping animals is NOT an adequate reason to enter, occupy, or reenter a dangerous site.*

When NOT an Immediate Threat to Health and Safety . . .

1. Notify Animal Response Team Leader of the threat and the need to prepare for evacuation.
2. Notify staff, clients, and visitors to begin the process of relocation.
3. Designate a staging area for evacuated staff and animals along with a go kit of essentials (identifications plus care needs – restraints, food, water, medications – for 72 hours).
4. Place animals in carriers that are suitable for transportation.
5. Ensure accurate identification of all animals and all veterinary records for evacuated animals that need care.
6. Create and confirm a database back-up offsite.
7. Remove critical records.
8. Shut off utilities, such as gas and water, to avoid secondary damage.
9. If time permits, back-up and remove non-critical records as well as spare equipment and supplies.

#### Long-Term Sheltering

- In some disasters, there is the possibility that the response and recovery operations may stretch into weeks or months. Most volunteers are not prepared or able to continue operating an emergency pet shelter for large numbers of animals belonging to people who have been left homeless by a disaster. Alternate sites may be a necessity.
- Emergency pet shelters that are short on resources or must close might focus on three possibilities:
  - Fostering elsewhere in the local community. People willing to foster animals are typically members of their local humane society or shelter. Fostering of animals for people made homeless by a disaster is designed as a long term but still temporary measure – the rightful owners will take the pet back as soon as they are in housing where they can keep their pet. Fostering programs need to be designed with care, with possible fosters approved ahead of time. Similar programs are used nationwide for fostering the pets of battered women who seek refuge in a battered women’s shelter but are not permitted to have pets with them in the shelter.
  - Moving animals from the emergency pet shelter to an animal shelter or pound in another city or county with space for the animals. This effort entails shipping adoptable shelter animals from a local shelter to locations nation-wide in order to reduce the population at the animal shelter and could possibly make room for boarding the pets of disaster-affected people until they can once again take their pets back.

- Boarding animals at veterinary clinics and / or private kennels. This is especially necessary in the case of known aggressive animals that can't be fostered. Post-disaster, as boarding kennels and veterinary clinics begin to reopen for business, arrangements can be made for long-term boarding of sick or injured animals.

#### Closing the Shelter

- Authority for closing the shelter rests with the Animal Response Team Leader in consultation with Incident Command. That decision will be communicated directly to the Liaison or the Shelter Manager. Once the decision has been made to close the shelter, break down can be initiated and may, if necessary, be phased in over time if some animals are still in residence. The Shelter Manager may request that the Liaison call in extra volunteers to assist in breakdown if needed. In lieu of this, other available volunteers may be used.
- Once owners have checked out all the animals housed in the emergency pet shelter, all crates, kennels and cages should be broken down and removed from the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting of crates and kennels after breakdown can occur off-site.
- All crates, materials and supplies should be removed from the facility and plastic sheeting taken up.
- When the incident is declared over and all the animals have been claimed or transferred, staff and volunteers at the shelter will be expected to help with the tear down and cleanup of the area used, cleaning of the equipment and transportation of equipment back to the storage unit.
- The Shelter Manager or a designee is responsible for assigning responsibilities for demobilization of the shelter.

*The facility should be left as clean as or cleaner than before the shelter was set up.*

- All floors will be cleaned and disinfected. Any furniture, tables or shelves used for holding crates and animals will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes. Handrails, water fountains and doorknobs will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.
- Trash receptacles will be emptied and bagged trash placed in designated dumpsters.
- Facility restrooms will be cleaned and the trash emptied.
- The Shelter Manager will inspect the building before leaving and correct any discrepancies noted.
- Cages, crates and kennels will be cleaned and disinfected before being returned to their appropriate storage locations.
- All towels, sheets and bedding will be laundered with detergent and bleach after being used for each animal. All towels, sheets and bedding will be laundered before storing in watertight containers.
- All materials, including forms, vests, equipment and supplies will be returned to the appropriate organization.
- Reports are to be filled out by the Staff, after an incident is over. Information to be reported should include, but is not limited to:
  - Where did incident take place?
  - What kind of incident was it?
  - Who was involved?
  - How many animals did the team handle?
  - How long did incident last?
  - What follow-up forms or documents were relayed to outside officials?

- What photos were taken?
  - What were medical problems, deaths and disposition of animals?
- A debriefing meeting will be held within ten (10) days after the event is declared over, to finalize the following business:
  - Do any of the team members need stress debriefing? (If so, arrangements need to be made as soon as possible).
  - How did the program work?
  - How was the volunteers' response time?
  - What were the problem areas?
  - What would or should change?
  - What were our strengths?
  - What supplies and equipment need restocking?
- Staff and volunteers involved in the incident should be asked to fill out a survey about how the incident went for them.
- All paperwork is to be turned to the Shelter Manager. Documentation of the incident will include all registration and animal intake forms, photographs of pets and owners, volunteer registration forms, incident logs kept by the Shelter Manager and the Liaison, receipts for purchases and thank you letters. This documentation will form the basis of the report from the emergency pet shelter to the Animal Response Team Leader. Information on individuals included on these forms will be considered confidential.
- The Shelter Manager will submit a written report to the Animal Response Team Leader. This report will be based on the logs kept at the Shelter. It will include the number and types of animals housed, an assessment of operations and staffing, descriptions of problems or "incidents within the incident" and how they were handled, and identify any gaps in skills, staffing or logistics. The report will include a section on lessons learned during the incident.
- The Animal Response Team Leader will write thank-you letters to people, agencies or companies who assisted the emergency pet shelter during the disaster. These letters should be written within a week of the closing of the shelter and form part of the documentation of the incident.