

DEVELOPING A SITE FOR EMERGENCY ANIMAL CARE

Potential Sites

The best place for emergency animal care depends on the nature and phase of the emergency. During response to incidents that entail an evacuation, such as a hurricane, animal care facilities should be close to Red Cross Shelters. Evacuated pets and their owners can be separated by as little as an interior wall or the walkway between a shelter and a service shed. After the storm passes, during recovery, animals might well be tended outdoors.

Facilities that might be adapted for emergency animal care include:

- School
- Recreation Center
- Public Works Garage
- Warehouse
- Fairgrounds
- Ball Field
- Storefront
- Livestock pastures
- Parking lots

Site Selection Criteria

- Location – Handy, accessible
 - Easy for volunteers and the public to find.
 - Close to evacuation routes and well-serviced roads.
 - Permitting 24/7 access for staff and volunteers (vs. an area likely to be subject to curfew).
 - Convenient for owners to visit (e.g., with appropriate prearrangement, to care for their own pets).
 - Easy for large trucks and supply vehicles to find, enter, and exit.
- Size – Better to err on the side of too large than too small
 - Large enough for the estimated number and variety of animals requiring shelter. (Rule of thumb for dogs and cats: each stack of crates requires 12-16 square feet (3' or 4' by 4') of floor space plus an access aisle, 3-4 feet in width.)
 - Ample clearance or walls to separate zones for dogs, cats, isolation (health or behavioral problems), and registration/administration.
- Facility design – Open-air or closed building
 - Readily heated, cooled, or ventilated.
 - Easily disinfected (e.g., non-porous floors, floor drains).
- Floor plan
 - A single, easily recognized entrance and reception area.
 - Readily divided for separation of animal types (dogs, cats, isolation).
 - Allowing a smooth flow of human traffic.

- Adjacent to an exercise area with perimeter fencing.
- Amenities – for staff as well as animals
 - Bathrooms.
 - Staff break area.
 - Canteen or storage area for food and drinks.
 - Quiet office area for meetings or paperwork.
- Utilities
 - Electricity (e.g., ideally with back-up generator).
 - Water (e.g., for hoses as well as sinks).
 - Sewer (e.g., sinks and floor drains).
 - Garbage removal/disposal.
 - Phone/computer.
 - Internet service.
- Safe from hazards
 - Sturdy enough to withstand high winds (e.g., masonry construction, rugged roof, tempered exterior windows).
 - Above flood zone and tidal surge.
 - Clean and free of pests.
 - Free of trip-and-fall hazards, loose material overhead, exposed wiring, or sharp edges or objects in pedestrian areas.
 - Well separated from hazardous material storage sites (e.g., fuel storage for back-up generator).
 - Fire-proof, with panic-bar exits, and emergency lighting.
- Security
 - Facility and perimeter with limited access (e.g., fencing).
 - Serviced by public safety officers. (Note: Animal-related security may be a low logistical priority for Incident Command in the first days of a disaster.)
 - Place to lock up medications, as required by DEA regulations.
 - Securable exterior space for operating machinery (generators, vehicles).
- Parking
 - Solid surface for parking areas (to avoid getting vehicles stuck in mud/sand).
 - Approach designed for large numbers of vehicles to enter/exit easily without obstructing parking areas or road.
 - Parking for staff.
 - Parking for the public, picking up or dropping off animals.
 - Parking for large vehicles – RVs, delivery trucks, or trailers.