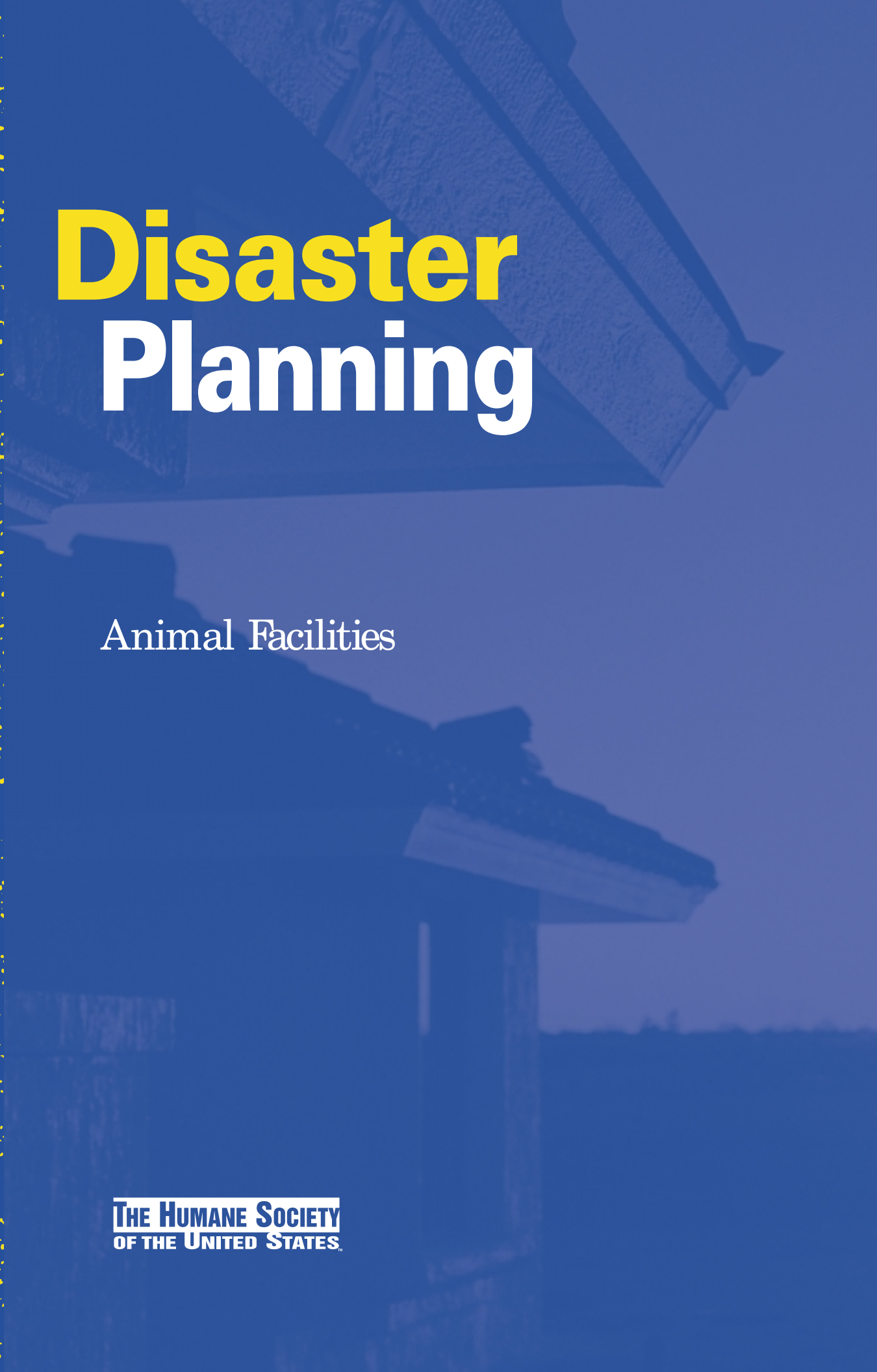
Disaster Planning

Animal Facilities



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES™

Disaster Planning for Animal Facilities

Introduction

It is vital that animal facilities prepare for disasters, both to protect the animals housed there and to safeguard the facility. A lack of planning can increase the magnitude of the disaster for humans and animals alike, while a proactive approach to planning and preparation for potential emergencies allows an organization to mitigate damage and downtime.

Animal facilities include animal shelters, kennels, veterinary clinics and hospitals, pet shops, horse stables, and other facilities where animals are routinely housed. The following guidelines will help determine how vulnerable a facility may be to a variety of disasters.

I. Evaluate the Facilities Location

It's important to determine the emergencies that could impact a facility. The following are examples of risks from both man-made and natural disasters.

A. Structure Fire

Fire is the most common threat to facilities. Most structure fires are caused by the careless use of tobacco products or by electrical malfunctions. Many pet stores and veterinary offices are located in shopping centers. Fires in nearby or adjoining businesses can send flames or toxic smoke throughout the building.

B. Hazardous Material Spill

Just about any facility can be affected by a release of hazardous materials. Is the facility located near transportation routes where the movement of hazardous wastes, chemicals, or explosive materials occurs? (railroads, highways, airports, waterways) Is the facility located near any structures that house, manufacture, or use large quantities of hazardous materials, such as nuclear power plants or chemical plants? The threat of contamination or explosion may cause authorities to order evacuation of an area, so plans to evacuate or otherwise protect the animals must be in place and practiced regularly.

C. Winds

Facilities can be damaged by high winds that weaken the structure or tear off the roof. However, most damage is caused by wind-borne debris or fallen trees hitting the building. High winds can be caused by tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, or severe thunderstorms, depending on the facility's location.

D. Flooding

There are two major types of flooding to consider.

1. Riverine. Determine if the animal facility is in the floodplain for lakes, creeks, or rivers. Local governments have floodplain maps that show how high the water will rise based on the amount of rainfall for a given period of time. Even though a structure is not close to a body of water, it may still be subject to flooding from the back-up of water from other areas. Flooding may occur quickly in hilly areas or when dams burst, or more slowly, which gives facilities more

time to relocate animals and important possessions. Even if a facility is not directly impacted by a flood, management should consider whether staff will be able to reach the site.

2. Storm Surge. This strong surge of waves accompanies hurricanes and tropical storms as they move near land or make landfall. Depending on the category of storm, the waves can be more than 25 feet above normal. It is recognized that storm surge is responsible for the vast majority of damage in impacted areas. Consider both flooding risks and the potential for structural damage to your facility. Coastal communities have storm-surge maps that show where water is expected to inundate. These areas are considered evacuation zones, and any animal facility within a storm-surge area should determine a plan for removing its animals and important possessions to another, safer area.

E. Earthquakes

There are earthquake faults throughout the United States. With the exception of South Florida, every part of the country can experience earthquakes. Regardless of recent seismic history, everyone should prepare for the possibility of earthquakes.

F. Wildfire

Wildfire can pose a threat to animal facilities if they are located near wooded tracts of land. Again, a consideration is whether staff would have access to and from the site if roadways are shut down because of wildfires.

G. Blizzards, Ice, or Winter Storms

In addition to concerns caused by extreme low temperatures, animal facilities must also be prepared for utility outages and disruptions in transportation for the delivery of animal feed and other supplies.

Check with your local emergency management department or fire department for assistance in assessing the potential disasters in your area.

II. Evaluate the Animal Facility's Vulnerability

After the possible disasters to the facility have been determined, the risks to the building itself for each type of disaster can be identified. Document the areas that will need attention and should be included in the disaster plan. Consider the following areas of concern:

A. Structural Integrity

What is the building constructed of? (wood, concrete block, brick) Is it solid enough or adequately reinforced by strapping to withstand hurricane-force winds or water or snow loading? Does the building contain hazardous building materials such as asbestos? Is there exposed, overloaded, or old electrical wiring? Does it have sliding-glass doors, large windows, or a large number of windows that could shatter during high winds or earthquakes or allow significant heat loss in cold weather?

B. Structural Design

It is important to recognize the design features of the facility that make a difference in developing a disaster plan. For instance, in a situation where flooding is the threat, a two-story building could allow for on-site storage of important items, such as records, computers, or furniture. The placement of exit doors is important in determining an evacuation plan. Whether kennels are indoors, outdoors, or both will determine whether animals have to be evacuated or if they can be safely housed on-site. Every facility should have an interior area that would provide safety in a hurricane or tornado. Proper drainage in and around the property will help prevent or minimize flooding.

C. Safety Features

When considering the safety features of the facility, the following questions should be considered: Does the facility have a sufficient number of fire extinguishers, and are they convenient and easy to locate? Do all employees know how to use them properly? Are there smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout the facility, and are the batteries checked at least twice a year? (An alert system and sprinklers are preferred.) Is smoking allowed? If so, is a proper smoking policy in effect? Is there a safety zone around the facility cleared of underbrush and trees to prevent wildfire from reaching the building? If the building is in a wildfire area, does it have a non-flammable roof to minimize fire from sparks? Could security measures such as padlocks on cages also prevent quick evacuation of animals or personnel?

It would be advisable to have the building properly evaluated by an engineer or other professional experienced with the requirements necessary for a facility to withstand disasters. Understand that many of these safety features may not be required by local building codes. They must be requested by the building owner. Check with the local emergency management department to see if this is a service it provides or if it can recommend a professional.

III. Develop a Plan

Once you have determined the types of potential disasters and identified the structure's vulnerabilities, you can develop plans. The disaster plan should address four areas: mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery.

Mitigation includes making permanent changes to the property or facility to eliminate or minimize the impact of disasters (i.e., installing shutters, altering drainage, strapping hazardous material tanks). Preparation includes taking steps to prepare for specific emergencies, such as purchasing generators and additional animal caging or training staff. Response outlines specifically how staff react once the disaster is imminent or has occurred (i.e., staff responsibilities, animal care, equipment use). Recovery includes setting guidelines for returning to normal operations and should include short- and long-term goals outlining what will take place over the days and months after a disaster.

A. Mitigation

1. Protect Windows and Glass. If the animal facility is in an area prone to hurricane-force winds, all glass windows and doors should be fitted with shutters to prevent the glass from shattering and causing additional damage or injuring persons or animals. While properly fitted plywood panels are acceptable for small glass areas, large windows or sliding-glass doors are difficult to properly board and require commercial hurricane shutters. Shutters are also recommended in wildfire areas to prevent glass from heating.

2. Detect Fire. An internal sprinkler system can detect and prevent fire from getting out of control and is the best prevention method available. If the facility does not already have a fire-alarm system, one should be installed. Have it connected directly into the fire department or 24-hour security company. Many fires start at night when no one may be in the area to hear an on-site alarm. Minutes may count in saving the lives of the animals in the facility, so it is essential that authorities are notified immediately.

3. Prevent Lightning Damage. Install a lightning-suppression system. Check with a contractor to determine which system would be best for your facility.

4. Use Safe Roofing Materials. Consider roofing the facility with non-flammable materials such as metal. Strapping of roof beams can be retrofitted into an existing structure.

5. Provide for Adequate Drainage. Consult professionals to determine what steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate flooding in and around the facility, especially if it is on the edge of a floodplain or has had flooding problems. This could make the difference between staying in the facility or having to evacuate.

B. Preparation

1. Prepare the Facility. Every facility should take steps to be prepared for possible emergencies. Here are some key considerations.

a. Establish Priorities. The facility's animals are the top priority. Create plans to evacuate or protect them. For example, have a sufficient number of Evac-u-sacs or carriers available to handle all the animals. Next, identify the most expensive or irreplaceable items, or those items that are most necessary to get the facility operating again (i.e., office records, equipment).

b. Plan for Movable Inventory. Make arrangements in advance for a safe location where movable inventory can be taken (i.e., animal control trucks, cars). This should be away from potential damage from falling trees, flying debris, or floodwaters. Vehicles may also need to be strapped down in the case of high winds.

c. Identify Internal Safe Areas. Internal areas without windows should be designated for employees to take cover in tornadoes or severe thunderstorms. Next, important equipment should be considered. If it is not practical to take it off-site, make plans to move it to a secure place internally. If water is expected to enter the facility, stack the equipment as high as possible (upstairs, if available) and wrap it with waterproof tarps or plastic. Secure with rope or tape. Any furniture should be anchored.

d. Identify Flammable Materials. In the case of wildfire, remove drapes or any flammable materials near glass doors or windows to prevent them from catching fire if the glass becomes heated.

e. Acquire Necessary Equipment. Procure all the equipment that the facility would need in a disaster or arrange ahead of time to borrow it. This includes such items as generators and water pumps. Make sure you have the proper hookups and have personnel who know how to operate the equipment properly and safely.

f. Be Prepared for Fires. Have fire extinguishers readily available throughout the facility, and make sure all employees know how to operate them. Check pressure gauges twice a year when the smoke alarm batteries are checked. If in a wildfire-prone area, keep hoses with lawn sprinklers attached on all sides of the building for wetting down roofs constructed with flammable materials.

g. Secure Hazardous Materials. Attach all hazardous material tanks securely to the building by strapping at the top and bottom. Floodwaters and high winds have tremendous force, so do not assume that any storage container is too heavy to need strapping. Turn off the valves on all hazardous material tanks. Label all tanks so emergency responders will know what chemicals they are dealing with in a disaster.

If small quantities of hazardous materials are stored in the facility on shelves, make sure the shelves have adequate lips to keep materials in place during earthquakes or high winds. If at all possible, store the materials in closed cabinets with safety latches. Separate all incompatible chemicals. Even common compounds such as bleach and ammonia can produce toxic fumes if mixed. Diesel fuel and fertilizer mixed together are explosive. Even small quantities of hazardous materials should be labeled.

Keep updated inventories of all hazardous materials. Duplicate copies of the inventory list should be stored on-site and in a safe place off the premises or taken with staff upon evacuation.

h. Contact the Local Fire Service. Ask firefighters to do a fire drill at the facility so they are familiar with where the animals are housed and how latches are operated. Also ask them to do a walk-through to point out situations that might pose a fire or chemical hazard.

i. Identify the Facility's Flood Potential. Check the floodplain or storm-surge maps located at the local emergency management department. See if the facility is in danger of flooding, and if floodwaters could cut the facility off from the rest of the community, making it impossible to evacuate or get assistance and supplies.

j. Be Part of the Local Emergency System. Make sure your facility is considered a part of the overall community emergency plan. All animal facilities should have an emergency alert system as part of their disaster plan. Radios for this purpose should be placed in strategic locations throughout the facility, and staff should be assigned the responsibility of monitoring the radios and notifying other staff when an alert is in progress. Larger animal facilities may be part of a call-down or telephone-tree set up within the community to alert of dangers in the area.

Know emergency terms and take alerts seriously. A "watch" is generally issued if conditions are favorable for the event to occur. A "warning" is generally issued when the expected event is imminent or occurring. The radio should be monitored constantly during any alerts for updated information on the potential disaster.

k. Devise an Evacuation Plan. Evacuations are labor- and equipment-intensive and require extensive planning and practice. Guidelines for making evacuation decisions should be developed carefully. A good plan is critical. Lack of planning can mean death or severe injury to animals or personnel. Devise a system for ensuring that all personnel and animals are accounted for before leaving the facility so that no one is left behind.

When evacuations are ordered or recommended by government officials, time may be too short for animal facilities to appropriately react. It is not necessary to wait for an official order to evacuate. If there is concern that the facility is in danger, the evacuation plan should be implemented.

Pre-determine a safe location to which animals, employees, and important possessions can be moved. Arrangements should also be made for back-up facilities in case the first site is also impacted by the disaster.

Consider how the evacuation will be conducted. For example, does the facility have the vehicles and staff necessary to move animals quickly? Is there proper caging for smaller animals to be safely contained during the evacuation? Are larger animals used to being loaded in trailers, and are there enough trailers for all of them? Animal feed and other supplies should be moved with the animals to the safe location, if possible. Paperwork should be completed on all animals so they can be identified and matched with owners at a later date. Staffing arrangements should be made to care for the animals in the new location. Notify local authorities when the evacuation of the facility is complete.

2. Prepare Employees.

a. Encourage Employees To Develop Personal Plans. All employees should have written personal disaster plans covering their home, family, and animals. The better prepared they are at home, the more likely it will be that they can help the organization prepare before a disaster or assist in response. Employee assignments at the facility are more effective when employees' personal plans are taken into account.

b. Get Input from All Employees. Ensure that employees understand their roles in the event of a disaster. Identify key personnel, outline their responsibilities, and provide training. It is not recommended that employees be required to participate in disaster preparation or response. Disaster plans can fall apart if they depend on people who are not available because of family or other concerns. See that all necessary employees have proper identification noting them as affiliates of the facility. If the area becomes restricted after the disaster, this may help them re-enter the area to work.

c. Provide Employee Training. Regular training should be given to all employees in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid (for humans and animals), and disaster preparations, particularly for events such as tornadoes, earthquakes, and fire that come on rapidly. Hold quarterly drills.

d. Encourage Employee Immunizations. Personnel should have up-to-date protective immunizations for rabies, tetanus, hepatitis, etc. Even if the facility's health plan does not cover such preventative measures, it may be worthwhile to set aside funds to pay some or all of the costs. It can cost employers more money if non-immunized employees become ill. Many of these vaccinations can be obtained for free or at low-cost through local public health authorities.

e. Identify Responsibilities and Tasks. It will be necessary to determine broad areas in need of attention in the event of a disaster, for example, the responsibilities of securing the facility, equipment, records, and animals. Each of these responsibilities can then be broken down into individual tasks. A written, chronological list of the tasks should be developed. The list will then be used by those responsible to prepare each area in the event of a disaster. A written plan ensures that no steps are missed in the panic of a disaster or in the confusion of the aftermath. The written plan also ensures that even someone unfamiliar with the facility's disaster plan can provide assistance.

f. Assign Staff-Specific Tasks. With tasks identified, you can now determine staffing requirements. Each area of responsibility should be assigned the number of personnel necessary to complete all tasks in a timely fashion. In addition, alternates should be identified and cross-trained in the event primary personnel are unavailable. Even the best employee with the best intentions may not be able to assist if he or she becomes a victim or is unable to safely reach the facility.

Following any disaster, areas affected will be hazardous. It is imperative that all personnel receive hazard awareness training and any other training necessary to safely function in this environment. Special training should be given to those employees chosen as primary responders, since they will have responsibility for assessing damage to the facility, its equipment, and supplies and determining staffing requirements.

g. Notify Employees. Depending on when the "watch" or "warning" is issued, the disaster plan may change dramatically. Depending on the organization's operating hours, key employees may have to be called in to prepare the facility. Home phone, cellular phone, and pager numbers should be kept with the manager or director at all times. Employees not essential to emergency operations should be notified not to report to work until further notice. Have a plan to contact employees if telephone lines are inoperable, or pre-arrange for essential staff to come to the facility in the aftermath of a disaster without additional notification.

3. Prepare Administration.

a. Consider Staffing Requirements. Determine which staff members are essential to the emergency operation of the animal facility.

These will be the primary responders. Then, designate different categories of employees based on their responsibilities and ability to assist in a disaster. For example, one employee may be able to assist in preparation activities, but will not be able to return after the disaster because of family concerns. In other cases, employees may volunteer to be primary responders because they do not have family responsibilities or already know their home is in an evacuation area, so they cannot stay there. Such staffing information should be updated on a regular basis since family and living situations change.

b. Back Up Computer Records. Back up all vital computer files on a regular basis. Make plans to take files on disk if the facility is evacuated or electronically transfer all important records to a location outside the expected disaster area. If possible, keep an additional copy of computer files off-site in case of fire and back up those records as well.

c. Secure Non-Computer Records. These records should be placed inside plastic bags and packed in boxes. Move them to a safe location within the facility or off-site. Mark the outside of the boxes with information such as the department name or name of the supervisor responsible for records. If records are confidential, indicate this on the outside of the box. Identify a central location where boxes will be inventoried and stored.

d. Review Insurance Policies. Check annually to make sure the organization's insurance is adequate to cover all losses. Make a complete inventory of the property, including photographs and video footage of each room. Store this inventory with insurance papers in a safe place, keeping a duplicate off the premises.

C. Response

The response to a disaster should be carefully outlined in your animal facility disaster plan so that all concerns are covered. The primary goal is to have a safe, organized response, without sacrificing the flexibility necessary to deal with what will undoubtedly be a constantly changing situation.

The manner in which response to disaster occurs will depend largely on whether it is a rapidly or slowly developing emergency. Some disasters—tornadoes, earthquakes, hazardous material incidents, or fire—may occur with little advance warning. The disaster plan should be written for both "watch" and "warning" phases. When a "warning" or "watch" alert is issued, begin implementing the facility's disaster plan immediately.

1. Consider Employees. In preparing to respond to a pending disaster or its aftermath, a key consideration for any animal facility will be the ability of its employees to perform their normal duties or assist with response and relief efforts. If employees have written personal disaster plans, and they have been implemented, they are more likely to be available to assist at the animal facility during the emergency.

Carefully schedule the use of employees during a crisis. When advance knowledge of potential danger is available, as it is with hurricanes, release all personnel pre-determined to be non-essential as soon as possible so they can assist their families in making preparations. Release second-level employees as soon as they have completed their assigned disaster preparation duties. All other employees, except those who may be staying at the facility through the disaster, should leave as soon as the premises are secured. Employees should be released in time to reach shelter. In the case of hurricanes, this would be before sustained winds reach 45 mph.

Recognize that a few employees cannot operate the facility for an extended period of time without relief. It is common for people to work long hours before, during, and after a disaster. But this should be discouraged as much as possible. Some facilities, such as animal shelters, may also have responsibility for assisting animals in the community impacted by the disaster. This duty will come in addition to taking care of the animals already in the facility's care. An influx of new animals brought in by the public is also likely. Have a plan for staff to rotate back to work and allow the primary responding staff to rest, or train volunteers from the community to perform minor jobs that will free up trained staff to handle more difficult or technical tasks. Without such relief to the primary responders, exhaustion will eventually take over, and the employees can become a hazard to themselves, others, and the animals. Have a plan for all workers to take relief breaks. Make sure your facility has stockpiled food, water, and other necessities for workers.

All policies and procedures for response should be assembled into a manual accessible to each employee.

2. Implement Guidelines. Written guidelines for implementing the animal facility's plan should address steps individuals will follow in the event of a disaster. These steps should include having contact names and numbers, knowing when the emergency notification should be given, assigning responsibilities of on-site personnel in the event of disaster that occurs without warning, and having an organizational structure that identifies responsibilities for the plan's implementation.

Each area of responsibility should be completed in accordance with the guidelines of the plan based on the type, predicted impact, and scope of the disaster. However, the plan needs to recognize the variables of disasters and be flexible enough to deal with them.

3. Consider Equipment Needs. Plan ahead to acquire the equipment that may be needed in a disaster. Most animal facilities are dependent on electricity to provide lighting, heat, cooling, water, security, even automatic feeders. If the community's electrical power system is impacted by the disaster, a generator will be required. Make sure the generator is of adequate power to operate the facility's essential operations. If permanent generators are used, have a professional wire the building. Never hook temporary generators into the building's wiring. Run necessary appliances and equipment directly off the generators. Never place generators inside enclosed buildings because the exhaust fumes can overcome people and animals.

Facilities using well water must have a system for pumping water if the power is out. A generator can be used for this purpose, or a manual pump can handle smaller water needs. Community water or well water (if the wellhead was submerged by floodwaters) may be contaminated. Animal facilities should stockpile water and then immediately make arrangements for water to be brought to the site to provide drinking water for animals and for sanitation. Animal facilities should know what local agencies, such as emergency management, to contact in an emergency so that they are on the priority list for water.

Additional animal caging should be stockpiled in non-disaster times for emergency use. The caging may be necessary if permanent caging is damaged, if evacuation is necessary, or if additional animals need to be housed on a temporary basis. Airline crates for small animals or portable corrals for horses and other livestock can be stored on the property or nearby.

Proper caging also helps control disease. Expect that many animals coming in may not be vaccinated, or their health records may not be available. Nevertheless, the animals must be accepted in order not to be injured or killed in the disaster. Therefore, proper sanitation and

other precautions to alleviate the spread of disease should be included in the disaster plan.

D. Recovery

Recovery from the impact of a disaster will likely be the most difficult aspect of the disaster plan. The facility will be operating at less than 100 percent, staff possibly will be displaced or unavailable, and, in the case of a large disaster, a disrupted community can become an added burden. Recovery efforts should be approached in two steps: 1) assessment of the damage and an evaluation of needs, and 2) rebuilding of the facility, staff, and administration.

1. Make an Assessment. Identify personnel responsible for assessment of the disaster's impact and evaluation of all key areas of operation. Ideally, members of the assessment team should be identified and trained during the preparation phase of the disaster plan. Quickly determine the extent of damage and what immediate steps can be taken to minimize further damage and protect animals, people, and property. Make safety repairs immediately.

a. Check on All Animals and On-Site Staff. If any injuries have occurred, render appropriate first aid and get veterinary or medical treatment as soon as possible.

b. Survey the Facility. If damage exists, how extensive is it? Can all or part of the building be used safely with simple emergency repairs, or are there dangers from collapsing roofs or walls, gas lines, hazardous material spills, or damaged electrical lines? Does the site have water and electricity? If there has been flooding or rain damage, have an electrician inspect the premises before turning on the breakers. If in doubt, always contact experts to do a professional assessment. "Safety first" is the key: Never endanger employees or animals by being in a building that is dangerous. Any animal rescues should also be done with safety as a top priority.

c. Determine Accessibility of the Property. Can employees, emergency workers, and the public get to the facility? For example, are downed trees or floodwaters blocking roadways and making it difficult or dangerous for staff and supplies to be brought in on a regular basis? In some cases, animals may need to be evacuated to a more accessible location.

d. Check on Equipment and Other Supplies. What survived the disaster, and how severe is the damage to equipment and supplies? Did animal feed get wet or contaminated by chemicals?

e. Check on Staff Not on the Property During the Disaster. Determine who may be victims and who can assist at the animal facility. If possible, check on employees who did not report to work, but had made a prior commitment to do so.

f. Keep a Record of the Assessment. Make a written assessment of the building and its contents. Photograph or videotape damage. If possible, match the photos or footage to the original inventory photographs and video taken before the disaster. This will help expedite the processing of insurance claims and quickly get the necessary funds needed to repair or rebuild.

g. Notify Outside Agencies of the Facility's Status. If assistance of any kind is needed, the faster outside groups are called, the faster help can arrive. Animal shelters should contact national or state humane and animal control organizations that may be able to provide such assistance. Do not wait until resources are depleted to call. Anticipate the needs of the facility, including staffing, supplies, and equipment. Request that help as soon as possible. It may take relief supplies and personnel days to arrive, especially if the disaster impacts a large area and several animal facilities. It is also generally much easier to call out of a disaster area than it is to call into one. Do not wait for someone to contact you to offer assistance. Notify local authorities

and other appropriate organizations even if you do not need help so they do not spend time trying to determine your status. Continue to update outside organizations and local authorities on your changing status and needs.

2. Begin to Rebuild. If damage is extensive to your facility, or to the community at large, the process of rebuilding may take a long time. However, once the assessment is completed and emergency repairs are done, a plan should be developed for the long-term repair or rebuilding of the facility. The plan should identify what areas need to be repaired or rebuilt immediately, and those areas that can wait until resources become more readily available.

IV. Ongoing Planning

Once the initial animal facility disaster plan has been developed, it will be important to review procedures and policies on a regular basis. This should be done at least annually. The facility as well as its personnel are likely to change, so planning, preparation, and training must also change and be held on an ongoing basis. As new employees come on board, make sure they are up-to-date on their protective vaccinations and have training in CPR, first aid (for humans and animals), and the facility's disaster preparations.

Hold quarterly disaster drills. Even the best written plan will have flaws once it's put into practice. While a drill can never completely simulate the real thing, it will allow administrators and employees to find basic deficiencies and oversights. Also, many people learn better with hands-on experience, so going through the motions will make it easier in an actual emergency for them to remember what steps need to be taken.

There may be times when danger threatens, such as a hurricane or tornado, and the facility disaster plan is implemented, but nothing happens. Use the experience as a drill and be thankful that disaster was averted.

The key to a good animal facility disaster plan is for the document to be more than words on paper. Many facilities make the mistake of developing the initial plan, then putting it on a shelf to gather dust. When an emergency does occur, it is too late to read the plan and try to implement it. Disaster planning should be incorporated into the day-to-day operation of the facility. Decisions made concerning personnel, equipment, or changes to the structure should be made with disaster preparedness in mind. Every planning decision made and implemented will make a major difference in the facility's ability to respond and recover if disaster occurs.

Conclusion

It is important to consider the impact of a disaster not only on your facility and its animals, but also on the animals in neighboring areas. Animal shelters, kennels, and stables may be requested to receive animals evacuated from impacted communities in other areas. This can create a ripple disaster if the host animal facilities are unprepared.

Get involved in your local emergency plan. If it does not have an animal component at this time, work with other animal facilities and organizations in your area to develop a community animal disaster plan. Through planning, practice, and cooperation, animal facilities can greatly alleviate problems in their community when disaster strikes.

Animal Facility Disaster Plan

Quick Check

This plan developed for:

_____ Date: _____

I. Evaluation of Facility

A. Known dangers to facility in area

__ Fire inside facility
__ Hazardous material plants or disposal sites
__ Railroad tracks
__ Interstates
__ Fuel depots
__ Winds (tornadoes, hurricanes)
__ Flood plain
__ Storm surge area
__ Earthquake faults
__ Wildfires
__ Heat or cold emergencies
__ Emergency management has assessed dangers to shelter

B. Dangers of structure

Construction quality of building:
__ Excellent __ Good __ Fair __ Poor

Glass:
____ Sliding doors ____ Large windows
____ Number of windows

Kennels:
____ Indoor/outdoor ____ Indoor only
____ Outdoor only ____ Other

Structure:
__ One-story structure
__ Two-story structure
__ Basement

__ Presence of interior "safe" areas
__ Roof hurricane strapped or clipped
__ Non-flammable roof
__ Exposed, overloaded, or old electrical wiring
__ Adequate drainage in and around facility
__ Area cleared around structure on a regular basis
__ Professional evaluation of facility

II. Insurance

__ Annual check for adequacy
__ Location identified on floodplain map
__ Inventory done, video and photos taken
__ Copies of insurance policy, videos, and photos stored at: _____
_____
_____

III. Priorities

__ Evacuation plan for animals and staff
__ Evacuation locations designated and agreements signed

Evacuation Location #1:
_____
_____
_____

Evacuation Location #2:_____
_____
_____

__ Written facility plan developed
__ Plan developed for movable inventory (i.e., vehicles)
__ Additional caging secured
__ Glass properly secured
__ Fire alarm installed
__ Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed
__ Fire extinguishers installed
__ Sprinkler system installed
__ Employees trained to use extinguishers
__ Lightning suppression system installed
__ Adequate hoses attached to building
__ First aid kits (animal & human)
__ Weather alert radio

IV. Employees

__ Written personal disaster plans
__ Emergency contact information collected
__ Employee disaster manual written
__ Employee identification badges completed
__ Pyramid of release of employees developed
__ Non-business hours disaster plan completed
__ Hazard awareness training
__ Training in C.P.R.
__ Training in first aid (human & animal)
__ Training in disaster planning and response
__ Cross training done

Up-to-date immunizations for employees:

__ Pre-exposure rabies
__ Tetanus
__ Other

__ Volunteer training developed
__ No-smoking policy implemented

V. Specific Preparations

__ Hazardous materials—labeled, secured
__ Outside tanks—secured and valves closed
__ Incompatible chemicals separated
__ Inventories of chemicals updated regularly
__ Computer back-up completed

Copies of computer records stored at:

_____

__ Generator on site or access arranged
__ Water pump on site or access to water arranged
__ Outside area cleared of loose objects
__ Refrigerated inventory protected
__ Movable inventory (i.e., vehicles) fueled and protected
__ Freezer emptied of carcasses
__ Flammable materials removed

VI. Final Securing of Premises

__ Contact alarm companies
__ Take identification
__ Unplug equipment
__ Shut off electrical breakers, gas, and water
__ Recheck hazardous material valves

VII. Returning After the Disaster

__ Safety clothing and equipment (i.e., rubber gloves and boots)
__ Check on-site animals and staff
__ Assess damage to facility
__ Inventory equipment
__ Inventory supplies
__ Safety repairs done
__ Building checked by electrician
__ Outside agencies notified of status

VIII. Planning

__ Floodplain map posted
__ Quarterly disaster drills conducted
__ Facility disaster plan updated
__ Fire extinguishers recharged annually
__ Telephone-tree for employees and volunteers created
__ Electrical wiring checked

On _____ this plan should be re-evaluated and employees should be retrained.

_____ _____
Signature Date

Promoting
the protection
of all animals

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OF THE UNITED STATES™
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