

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Animal Response Plan

FORWARD

This Annex was developed to augment the S-A-W Emergency Operations Plan, for the care and control of animals in the event of a major emergency or disaster. Emergency planning, for the most part, focuses on saving lives and property. Planning for the care and control of animals has not, however, been a priority in the past.

Animals are often overlooked during and after a disaster, until they have become a problem. It is generally assumed that they can fend for themselves and not present additional problems for society. This Annex recognizes that animals could become a problem for society if not appropriately cared for and controlled.

When evacuation is imminent, it is very likely that people will not evacuate their homes if this includes abandoning their pets. It is expected that some of these pets will be taken to public shelters. This annex is intended to plan for these and other disaster situations with an orderly and effective response system. Concentration is on rescue, care, and feeding of animals abandoned or lost and those brought to public shelters.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Annex is to establish organizational responsibilities and general policies and procedures for the care and control of animals during natural and technological disasters. A major goal of this annex is to minimize animal suffering, loss of life, and subsequent disability by ensuring timely and coordinated assistance. The annex will also provide a system for returning animals to their owners after the event is over.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTION

A. Situation

1. Natural or man-made emergencies and disasters occur which require citizens to evacuate their homes.
2. Some citizens own domestic pets such as dogs and cats etc.
3. During the short-term absence of an owner, pets will remain at home supplied with adequate food and water. Owners may want to go back into their home to retrieve them, risking their safety.
4. Mass care facilities for citizens do not permit animals other than those used for special needs assistance.

B. Assumptions

1. During emergency evacuation, owners may seek extended care for pets in a facility other than the pet's home.
2. Unattended pets may be at risk to themselves and to the general population.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Mitigation

Because some emergencies and disasters may require sheltering and care of domestic pets outside their normal housing situation, their owners will take pets to designated veterinary hospitals, kennels, boarding facilities or other private animal care shelters.

In cooperation with Augusta County, Cities of Staunton, Waynesboro, and Shenandoah Valley Animal Services; an animal shelter will be set up at a location to be determined related to the needs of the appropriate jurisdiction. Owners can bring their pets directly to the selected location and a designated person will fill out the necessary intake forms.

B. Preparedness

1. Coordinate, develop and maintain with appropriate agencies a resource network, with lists of veterinary hospitals, kennels and boarding facilities that will participate in the sheltering of domestic pets during emergencies and disasters.
2. Establish rules and regulations in conjunction with participating groups for the emergency care and sheltering of pets.
3. Coordinate preparedness information activities with the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center, Humane Society, media and other groups publicizing emergency mass care for pets.
4. Provide the American Red Cross the name of the contact person for animal shelter.
5. Maintain a current resource list of participating groups with contact persons, telephone numbers and a list of appropriate interested agencies.

C. Response

1. Notify Care and Sheltering network group that an animal shelter has been established at (to be determined) location.
2. Notify American Red Cross, media and other concerned groups that the Animal Shelter has been activated.
3. Follow established procedures as stated in emergency sheltering guidelines.

D. Recovery

1. Follow procedures for deactivation of animal shelter in cooperation with the Coordinator(s) of Emergency Management or designee.
2. Notify participating boarding facilities, appropriate agencies and local media of cessation of emergency and timing of owner retrieval of animals.
3. Review and evaluate, by all participating groups, procedures and situation during emergency operation.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

The Emergency Management Coordinator(s) or designee will work with the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center and with private animal boarding facilities and veterinarians to develop a network of animal care participants available during emergencies. All affected agencies shall:

1. Prepare Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and functional checklists for animal control response to a disaster or emergencies.
2. Train all personnel and alternates.

B. Local Emergency Management:

1. Maintain a current list of veterinary hospitals and boarding kennels within the County. The Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA) can assist with providing a current directory of local animal care and control contacts.

2. Coordinate animal and mass care sheltering for adults with the Emergency Management Coordinator(s), Shenandoah Valley Animal Services, Animal Control and Red Cross.
 3. Disseminate animal sheltering and emergency care information to the public prior to, during and after disasters.
 4. Assign a representative from the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services during activation of the plan to implement the components of the plan. This individual shall:
 - a. Maintain a record of all incoming messages and requests for animal sheltering.
 - b. Coordinate response to requests for animal sheltering with the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services, Augusta County, Staunton and Waynesboro Animal Control, and trained volunteers in a timely manner.
 - c. Provide all paperwork, supplies and personnel needed to provide emergency sheltering for incoming animals.
 - d. Coordinate disaster animal care and control with the following agencies: Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians (VALVT), Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA), and Virginia Federation of Humane Societies (VFHS).
 - e. Provide the Emergency Management Coordinator or designee with a report of response for animal sheltering.
 - f. Identify the problems that develop during implementation of the plan that require resolution.
- C. Shenandoah Valley Animal Services
1. Upon notification from the Emergency Management Coordinator(s) or designee, the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services will coordinate emergency animal care and control.
 2. Will be responsible for the recruitment, training and screening of volunteers for placement in appropriate positions. A plan should also be developed to screen and place volunteers coming on the scene during and after a disaster.

3. Develop an identification system for animals; the system needs to include some type of band that cannot be easily removed. There also needs to be a system for photographing and recording details of each animal.
4. In order to reduce the chance of the spread of disease and protect public health, it is essential that the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services coordinate with Local and State Officials in the picking up and removal of dead animals.
5. Coordinate the transportation of animals to emergency animal shelter(s).

D. County/City Animal Control Officers

1. Assist with the transportation of animals to emergency animal shelter.
2. Assist with coordinating training and plan development exercises for other support agencies
3. Assists in the development of a resource directory for animal control during major emergencies and disasters.
4. Assist with coordinating the removal of dead animals.

E. Private Animal Care Shelters (veterinarians, SPCA, and boarding kennels)

1. Provide emergency sheltering of animals.
2. May provide other technical services or resources.

F. State

1. The State Veterinarian in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is the primary contact for coordination, direction and control of animal care and control organizations assisting in emergencies and is responsible for the following:
 - a. Communication with recognized animal health care responders and agencies.
 - b. Appointment of the Animal-Care Coordinators for the State EOP.
 - c. Coordination of disaster activities with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM).

- d. Coordination of member organizations with other State Veterinary Medical Associations and other Emergency Management Agencies.
- e. Maintain a list of Emergency Field Veterinarians, Emergency Animal Control Personnel, Emergency Field Veterinary Technicians and Emergency Nonnative Wildlife Field Personnel, and their alternates.
- f. Assistance in coordination of donations of food, supplies and resource with local jurisdiction.
- g. Maintenance of liaison with regulatory agencies.
- h. Determining which animal care personnel are qualified to enter disaster areas.
- i. Coordination of sample collection with the State Chemist and Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICS

A. General

The Emergency Management/Services Coordinator(s) will work closely with the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center in the administration and logistics of the emergency animal control and care program.

VI. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The Emergency Management/Services Coordinator will review this annex to ensure that necessary updates and revisions are prepared and coordinated, based on deficiencies identified in exercises and emergencies.