

Animal Care and Shelter

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A Supporting Annex to the Mass Care and Shelter Plan

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1.0 PURPOSE

This document specifically addresses the issues related to the rapid response to disasters affecting the health, safety, and welfare of animals and their owners. Research has shown that human risk is minimized and public compliance is increased if preparation and coordination of issues involving animals occurs prior to an incident.

In addition, in October 2006, President George W. Bush signed the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act (PL 109-308) into law. This Act is an amendment to the Stafford Act, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.). This legislation requires states accepting federal funding for homeland security under the Stafford Act to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness plans “take into account the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency.” This law requires local civil preparedness plans to include provisions for evacuating pets and service animals of people with disabilities.

In California, the legislature passed AB 450 into law, which adds Sec. 8608 to the Government Code and assures that California will comply with federal requirements. This law requires the incorporation of an existing program, CARES (California Animal Response Emergency System) into the State’s Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The CARES program was developed under the California Department of Food and Agriculture (which has jurisdiction over animal rescues) in 1997 to coordinate State agency response in assisting local government and volunteer organizations to address the needs of animals during disasters. The California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) is required, in coordination with all interested state agencies with designated response roles in the state emergency plan and interested local emergency management agencies, to jointly establish by regulation a Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) for use by all emergency response agencies, to include specified components.

1.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In Sacramento County, Animal Care and Regulation has the responsibility to oversee the care and welfare of domesticated animals within the County. The goal of this annex is to provide guidance for safe, secure and sanitary, temporary facilities for the care and shelter of animals affected by the event or disaster in Sacramento County.

The objectives of this section are to:

- Provide for the humane treatment of animals during an emergency response and recovery.
- Respond to and assist with Animal Care and Regulation, rescue, and/or sheltering problems.
- Remove and/or dispose of injured and deceased animals.
- Protect public safety, as related to animal concerns.
- Control infectious diseases (i.e., rabies).

1.2 SPECIFIC ASSUMPTIONS

Certain assumptions were made during the development of this annex, those are as follows:

- Sacramento County is vulnerable to several hazards that may require the evacuation of the public and their pets, service animals, and livestock to safe areas. This includes flooding, hazardous materials incidents, dam failures, wildfires, and terrorism.
- Disaster conditions may also result in injured, lost, and/or displaced animals, dead animals, and animals with diseases.
- The most efficient and effective method of minimizing the impacts of disasters on animals and their caregivers is to promote the disaster preparedness of animal caregivers. Caregivers should be prepared to provide for the needs of their animals, without assistance, for at least three days following a disaster. This includes being prepared to evacuate animals.
- In an emergency, animal caregivers are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of their animals.
- In small scale, short-term evacuations, it may be sufficient for animals to stay in vehicles or other safe areas, with minimal support from primary and support agencies.
- Since the ability of animal caregivers to provide for their animals may be impacted or overwhelmed by the emergency, and since many caregivers may not be adequately prepared, primary and support agencies and their partners will need to support care for animals.
- Animal care in disasters will be consistent with methods for all-hazard emergency management, as described in the Sacramento County Emergency Operations Plan.
- Companion animal owners, livestock owners, defenders of animal rights, and other citizens may attempt to provide assistance in an uncoordinated fashion, hindering the capacity of responders to provide the most effective support.
- Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation provides service to the unincorporated areas of Sacramento County and can assist other jurisdictions upon request.
- Other jurisdictions/agencies may call on Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation for support or to respond to calls associated with large or exotic animals.
- Other than service animals, shelters in Sacramento County will not accept any animals inside the human shelters; rather the animals may be located in close proximity to the human shelter.
- Animal owners and caregivers may avoid or postpone evacuation unless sufficient accommodations are made for their animals.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

Animals

For the purposes of responding to animal issues during disasters, the State of California defines “animals” as, “affected commercial livestock, companion animals, exhibition animals, captive wildlife, and exotic pets.” This definition excludes non-captive wildlife. Shelter accommodations will address the needs of the pets and service animals that owners bring with them to shelters.

Service Animals

Need County ruling on this definition, as there are several.

Wild Animals

Wildlife shelter and rescue is not a main focus of this plan and is the full responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). All responses related to wildlife will be coordinated with the California Department Fish & Game (DFG), and Sacramento County may assist with the following actions:

- May be available to assist permitted facilities in the location of suitable alternative housing for their restricted species.
- May conduct warnings and assist in the evaluation of confined wildlife and exotic animals including, but not limited to, those held under CDFG permits.
- May assist with the assessment of lost or escaped captive wildlife, exotic animals, oil-soaked birds or other species as deemed appropriate.
- May coordinate the use of specialized personnel and equipment to recapture potentially dangerous escaped captive wildlife and exotic animals.

The CDFG will respond to animal disaster events involving wildlife that are endangering the public health or safety using the guidelines and protocols set forth in its Public Safety Wildlife Guidelines 2072,

“Consistent with Section 1801 of the Fish and Game Code, these Public Safety Wildlife Guidelines provide procedures to address public safety wildlife problems. Mountain lions, black bears, deer, coyotes, and large exotic carnivores which have threatened or attacked humans are wildlife classified as public safety problems.”

2.0 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

2.1 PREPAREDNESS

During the preparedness phase emphasis is placed on pre-designating facilities, preparing needed equipment, identifying staffing needs, planning, development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), preparing agreements with counterpart agencies/organizations, maintaining and updating resources and contact directories and training.

In advance of a disaster, Animal Care and Regulation will develop MOUs with facilities that could be converted to Emergency Animal Shelters. If the need arises during a disaster, the County may sponsor and/or open emergency animal shelters at these sites. In Sacramento County, all potential human shelters are surveyed for the opportunity to provide animal sheltering adjacent to the human shelter for peace of mind to the animal owners and convenience.

2.3 RESPONSE

Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation and conducts response to incidents that impact animals and their caregivers staff this function in accordance with the standards

described below.

Notification

- When an emergency occurs that has actual or potential impacts on animals, the field incident command or the Sacramento Office of Emergency Services (SOES) will notify Animal Care and Regulation.
- Incident command or SOES will notify Animal Care and Regulation in the event of a large-scale evacuation.
- Animal Care and Regulation will notify other support agencies as appropriate.
- Animal Care and Regulation or the American Red Cross may notify SOES/DHA directly if there is a need for animal shelter and care of pets in an emergency.

Situation Assessment

- Animal Care and Regulation is responsible for monitoring the status of animal care response activities and for regularly reporting on the status of response activities and resources to SOES.
- All agencies involved in emergency animal care will keep Animal Care and Regulation informed of their ability to respond, the status of response activities and resources.
- Other animal care agencies will keep Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation informed of the status of their animal response efforts.

Direction and Control

- Animal Care and Regulation is the lead agency responsible for search, rescue, and transportation of animals, care for large animals, and the enforcement of animal control ordinances during an emergency.
- Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation is the lead local agency responsible for animal care and shelter for pets. They may provide technical assistance in caring for large animals.

Search and Rescue

- In the event of an emergency where animals are lost or otherwise stranded in a hazard area, animal control agencies will coordinate the effort to search for and rescue animals from the area in coordination with fire, law enforcement, and other involved responders.
- Authorization for owners or animal rescue teams to enter evacuated areas is at the discretion of the incident commander.

Evacuation

- The incident commander is responsible for evaluating whether an evacuation is of a sufficient size and duration to warrant special provisions for animals and for requesting assistance from Animal Care and Regulation.
- Animal control agencies will organize the transportation of animals to safe areas or shelter sites.
- Animal Care and Regulation maintains procedures for evacuation that are separate from this plan.

Please refer to the Sacramento County Evacuation Plan and Evacuation Movement Unit resource materials for more information.

Care and Shelter

- Animal Care and Regulation is responsible for providing SOES with information about the numbers and types of animals that are being evacuated.
- In coordination with the American Red Cross, Animal Care and Regulation will establish pet shelter locations in an emergency. If possible, they will be located close to human shelters.
- Animal Care and Regulation is the lead local agency responsible for the care and shelter of livestock, horses, and other large animals in coordination with the County Agricultural Commissioner.

Tracking Animals and Transfer of Custody

- Primary and support agencies will track animals to provide for accountability and to ensure that animals can be efficiently re- united with their owners.
- Involved agencies will only use forms designated by Animal Care and Regulation to support tracking and accountability of rescued and sheltered animals.

Disposal of Dead Animals

- Animal Care and Regulation will coordinate with Sacramento County Public Health to coordinate the proper disposal of dead animals.
- Sacramento County Public Health will provide guidelines and requirements for the safe handling and disposal of dead animals.
- Carcasses of hooved animals are not permitted in regular landfills.
- Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation in coordination with SOES will ensure that dead animals are appropriately handled in the course of disaster debris management.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation

- Develop and maintain a plan for coordinating animal search, rescue, and evacuation.
- Develop and maintain a plan for large animal care and shelter in coordination with the Agricultural Commissioner.
- Coordinate notification of other team members during an emergency.
- Assess the magnitude of the impact of the incident on animals, and assess response activities, and resources status. Regularly report status to the Sacramento county EOC.

Other animal control agencies

- Conduct search, rescue, and transportation of cats and dogs as required by an emergency.
- Keep Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation informed of response activities.

- Request assistance from Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation as needed.

Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner

- Assist in educational efforts to notify livestock industries of preparedness and response procedures.
- Maintain a list of resources and personnel available to assist local and state jurisdictions in the response and recovery phases in emergencies affecting significant numbers of livestock.
- Assist in providing coordination of information with state and federal agencies.
- Determine high-density animal populations at high risk in the event of an emergency.
- Coordinate with the Animal Care and Regulation and the American Red Cross in developing a plan and priority in transporting animals to animal care facilities when owners are evacuated to shelters.

Sacramento County Public Health

- Track notifiable and reportable conditions in animals that lead to human disease
- Act as liaison to California Department of Public Health.
- Advise on human health issues and procedures for management of animal wastes and dead animals.
- Provide recommendations to assure adequate vaccination of animal care workers when available

Law Enforcement

- Provide personnel and equipment resources as available and only after human health and safety issues have been fully addressed.
- Coordinate with Animal Care and Regulation and other animal rescue responders in the management of animal search, rescue, and evacuation operations.
- As resources allow, provide law enforcement support for road closures, operating isolation facilities, decontamination operations, animal depopulation actions, and closing feedlots.
- Provide personnel in restriction of entry into the restricted or quarantined area.

Sacramento County Fire Agencies

- Provide personnel and equipment resources as available and only after human health and safety issues have been fully addressed.
- Provide support to animal control agencies in rescue of trapped animals.

SOES Emergency Management

- Integrate messages and information regarding animal owner preparedness into disaster preparedness training and education.
- If necessary, in coordination with Animal Care and Regulation, establish a call center number for animal retrieval and other animal-related information.
- Serve as liaison between local jurisdictions and response agencies, Cal EMA and other appropriate state and federal agencies for requesting resources when the capabilities of local response agencies are exceeded.

- Integrate the concepts of operation in this plan into emergency management training programs as appropriate.
- Debrief participants and prepare after action reports.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

- Primary and supporting agencies are responsible for ensuring that they have access to the resources necessary to fulfill their responsibilities as described in this plan.
- Animal Care and Regulation will develop and maintain site use agreements and contact information for animal staging and large animal care sites in coordination with DHA.
- DHA will develop and maintain site use agreements and contact lists for pet shelter sites.
- Primary and supporting agencies are expected to provide their own logistical support during the initial phase of response operations. Additional support should be obtained through the incident commander or SOES as appropriate.
- In the event that local animal care resources, including local public, private, and mutual aid resources, are currently or will inevitably be overwhelmed, Animal Care and Regulation and SOES will request assistance through the REOC. The REOC will coordinate assistance from State and Federal levels.
- In the event that the incident overwhelms local resources for animal care and shelter, Animal Control may request assistance directly from the Humane Society (HSUS) of the United States and/or United Animal Nations (UAN). This request will be done in close coordination with SOES.
- Supporting non-governmental organizations should carefully track all costs associated with response and recovery efforts. Financial assistance may be available through state and federal disaster relief programs.
- Following a disaster, revenue-producing animal facilities should report impacts to the County Agricultural Commissioner. They may be able to obtain assistance through an agricultural disaster declaration.