

Introduction

This plan assessment tool is a resource to help you evaluate the degree to which you have planned and prepared for sheltering animals following an incident. It is intended for use by emergency preparedness planners and other personnel responsible for developing or updating a shelter plan for animals.

The tool is designed to walk you through a general concept of operations that addresses various strategies pertaining to animal sheltering. Each section includes a list of considerations for the given strategy drawn from current subject matter guidance and best practices. Evaluate your plan against the items in this tool to ensure that your plan fully addresses each strategy.

While this tool was developed with local governments in mind, it is still applicable to other entities with animal shelter plans, policies, or procedures. Animal sheltering and related services may be provided by the government, nonprofit organizations, private companies, or the combination of these. This document does not consider operations of unaffiliated animal service providers (e.g., faith-based, community-run).

Concept of Operations

Strategy One: Coordinate Pre-Planning

In response to an incident, a number of variables may factor into whether or not an animal shelter be opened, as well as what type. The plan may address decision-making authority, triggers or thresholds, and roles and responsibilities. Does your plan address the following:

- Making the decision to open animal shelters.
 - What determines whether you decide to activate your plan?
 - Who has the authority to order an animal shelter to be opened?
 - What determines the size and type of animal shelter to be opened?
- Who manages animal sheltering in your jurisdiction?
 - Is there an established agreement or contract with this organization? Is it current?
 - Is a copy of the agreement or contract attached to your plan?
 - If you do not have an agreement, what is the process of establishing one at the time of the incident?
 - In lieu of an agreement or contract, is the organization signed on to your animal issues plan?
- Definitions of animals (e.g. pets and large animals) and types of animal shelters.

- What types of animal shelters will your jurisdiction or assigned organization operate or support? (cohabitated, collocated, open, and/or large animal)
 - Does your plan address which type of animals are accepted to be sheltered according to the type of animal shelter?
 - Does your jurisdiction have separate contract with separate organizations to handle different types of animal shelters? (pet shelter vs large animal shelter)
- Is there a list of facilities that have been pre-identified and vetted to accommodate animals for each type of animal shelter that your jurisdiction will open or support?
- Identification of an animal shelter manager or liaison to report to either the shelter manager (if collocated or cohabitated) or the EOC on shelter information, such as daily animal shelter reports, resource requests, and any other major issues regarding the shelter.
- A process for how documentation (both at the EOC and in the animal shelter) should be maintained throughout and after the incident. This may include information such as call logs, receipts, major actions taken, resource requests, shelter counts, and animal tracking.

Strategy Two: Open Suitable Shelter Facilities

The scope of the incident will dictate the size, type, location, and number of animal shelters that should be opened. The circumstances of the incident may leave your preferred facility for animal sheltering unavailable or prevent you from using it. You may also need to address unaffiliated, pop-up shelters. Even though pop-ups are for people, you need to consider the animals that accompany them. Does your plan address the following:

- Which type of shelter should be opened given the scope of the incident?
 - Are there any guidelines for shelter layout (per type of animal shelter)?
- Establishing an agreement or contract with the owner/operator of the facility.
 - If you have one, is it current? Is a copy attached to your plan?
 - In lieu of an agreement or contract, is the organization signed on to the plan?
 - If you do not have an agreement, what is the process of establishing one at the time of the incident?
- Pop-up animal shelters.
 - How do you identify them?
 - How do you evaluate their ability to shelter animals with appropriate care and resources?

Strategy Three: Coordinate Shelter Management

Successful animal shelter operations depend on a dedicated leader and an effective staff. An ideal animal shelter plan should be able to describe the organization and requirements of a shelter management team and the roles and responsibilities of its members. Does your plan address the following:

- Staffing requirements for each type of animal shelter.
 - How do you determine which organization will staff the shelter (e.g., your jurisdiction, a nonprofit organization, a private company)?
 - What are the minimum staffing requirements for each type of animal shelter (cohabitated, collocated, open, or large animal)?
 - How will you scale staffing up or down to meet the demands of the animal shelter operations?
 - ◆ Are volunteers a consideration in your staffing plan?
 - What kind of training and certification is required for animal shelter staff?
- Roles and responsibilities of the animal shelter management team.
 - What are the overall responsibilities of each position on the animal shelter management team?
 - What are the responsibilities of the animal owners and how are they integrated into animal shelter operations? How is this communicated to animal owners?
 - Does your plan include standard operating guidelines (SOGs), job aids, and/or checklists for appropriate positions?
 - If appropriate, are NIMS resource typing definitions considered in the plan?
 - Does the plan suggest an ICS organization chart for animal shelter management?
- Communication.
 - What procedures are in place for animal shelter staff to communicate with human shelter management teams (if applicable) and partner agencies?
 - Does your plan include a communication flow chart?
 - How is information shared with the shelter coordinator and animal issues coordinator in the EOC?
 - How is information shared between the shelter coordinator and the animal issues coordinator in the EOC?

Strategy Four: Coordinate Shelter Operations

As the incident unfolds and a determination is made on which types of animal shelter to open, your plan should consider mechanisms that ensure orderly operations in the animal shelter while also providing for the needs of the animals. Does your plan address the following:

- What are the minimum shelter functions/services that need to be conducted and staffed at each type of shelter?
 - Items to consider (but not limited to):
 - ♦ Who will manage and provide security of site?
 - ♦ How will access to the shelter be maintained? How will staff, volunteers, and animal owners be tracked?
 - ♦ Who will provide care for the animals? (e.g. feeding, watering, exercise, veterinary treatments)
 - ♦ How will different species be separated in the shelter?
 - ♦ Has climate control been addressed (extreme heat or cold) as well as adequate ventilation and air quality of the facility?
 - ♦ How will incoming donations be handled?
 - ♦ How will volunteer management be coordinated?
 - ♦ How will you ensure that animals are reunited with their owner?
 - What additional functions should be considered that may require additional staff?
 - Is there any consideration that the types of shelter services may need to be scalable depending on the incident and type of animals being sheltered?
- Coordinating reception and registration, including intake and triage.
 - Does your plan include a process or checklist for animal and owner registration?
 - Does your plan include or reference an animal intake form?
 - Does your plan address quarantine procedures, decontamination and the treatment of ill/injured animals?
 - How will you track animals and owners in the animal shelter (e.g., wrist bands, photos, Emergency Tracking Network (ETN))?
 - What do you do with animals that the facility is not set up to shelter?
- A process for coordinating between other animal shelters, human shelters, and local EOCs.
 - How should documentation be maintained at the animal shelter throughout and after the incident? This may include information such as call logs, receipts, major actions taken, resource requests, shelter counts, and animal tracking.

- What kinds of information should the animal shelter management team report to the human shelter manager and/or the EOC (e.g., shelter population, environmental safety, public safety, epidemiological issues)?
- Do you know the process for requesting resources or receiving donations for your animal shelter (e.g., kennels/cages, water, food)?
- Safety and security of animals, human shelter occupants (if cohabitating), and shelter staff/volunteers at the animal shelter.
 - Which organization would be responsible for security of the shelter (e.g., local police, other law enforcement agencies, contract organization)?
 - Will an Animal Control Officer be on site?
- Health safety of animals.
 - Who provides veterinary services at the shelter?
 - ◆ Are they available 24/7 or only during the daytime?
 - ◆ Is there an established agreement or contract with this organization (if different from the animal sheltering organization)?
 - How will sanitation (including waste disposal) be maintained in the animal shelter?
 - How will isolation and quarantine of animals be handled?
 - How will epidemiological issues be handled? Who will these issues be reported to?
- Animal transportation services.
 - Does the plan address providing transportation to other locations for services and/or transfer of the animal shelter to another location?
 - What kinds of backups are in place if your main transportation service is unavailable?

Strategy Five: Coordinate Animal Shelter Logistics

The animal shelter management team should have access to various tools and resources to effectively run the animal shelter. An animal shelter plan should describe resources needed and the process for requesting them. Does your plan address the following:

- A process to request assistance and resources.
- Providing space and resources to the organizations that will be operating in the facility.
 - What special design considerations do you need to address in each type of animal shelter?
 - What kinds of supplies and equipment are needed to open and operate an animal shelter?
 - Are specialized items needed for different animals? Where will you acquire these items?
 - How will staff coordinate shelter infrastructure (e.g., tables, barriers between sections), connections (e.g., power, water, telephone, internet), and other general logistics?

- Storing and transporting sheltering supplies.
 - Where are sheltering supplies stored?
 - How do you transport them from storage to the animal shelter?
 - Will any supplies be stored at pre-determined shelter sites?
- Providing space and resources for animal shelter staff who may also need to stay at the shelter (e.g., people working in shelter who cannot get home).
- Tracking the cost of the facility for the purposes of reimbursement.

Strategy Six: Demobilization

Animal shelters should be demobilized as soon as they are no longer required and/or can no longer support such operations. Once the incident has passed and repopulation begins, animal owners need to collect their animals and be able to return home. Animals who are unable to return home, are strays, or are abandoned by their owners should be relocated to another operating animal shelter. Does your plan address the following:

- A process or checklist for demobilization.
 - What are the decision points and steps taken for demobilization?
 - Who determines the closure of an animal shelter?
 - Who would be responsible for demobilization?
 - What is the process for animal owners to check their animals out of the shelter?
 - What is the process for transitioning animals out of the shelter?
 - How are resources demobilized and/or stored for future animal shelter operations (e.g., cleaning kennels/crates and restocking expendable resources)?
 - Is there a reference to the jurisdiction's demobilization plan or some process for releasing resources and maintaining documentation?
 - ◆ How are animal shelter documents collected and stored?
 - Who is responsible for facility cleanup, disinfection and possible damages?
 - ◆ Do you have a contractor for decontamination of the facility?
- A process for managing animals that are unclaimed.
 - What is the process for animal owners to claim their animals?
- A process for notifying the EOC, animal owners, other partnering organizations, and the public regarding the closure of an animal shelter?
- Conducting a debriefing for the animal shelter management team.

Other Considerations

Strategy Seven: Coordinate Public Information

Public information is a critical tool for effective animal shelter operations. Without clear guidance, those in need of animal shelter services may not understand what is available to them. From the earliest opportunity and then as long as needed, concise, up-to-date information about types of animal shelters, locations, animal owner responsibilities, etc. should be conveyed to the public. Does your plan address the following:

- Roles and responsibilities for public information professionals related to animal shelter operations.
 - Does your plan identify who updates the local websites and social media?
 - Is someone with public information duties part of the animal shelter management team who is responsible for providing timely updates to animal owners with animals in animal shelters?
- Pre-scripted messaging, including the following topics:
 - The importance of evacuating with your animals rather than leaving them behind.
 - What animals are allowed at the animal shelter
 - Where and when the shelter will open.
 - What to bring to the shelter (e.g. vaccination records, kennels/crates, animal food).
 - What kinds of services are available at the animal shelter?
 - ◆ Veterinary services
 - ◆ Transportation services
 - ◆ Parking for trailers
 - Responsibilities of animal owners.
 - Whom to call for more information.
 - Information about welfare and animal reunification.
- Creating public information in alternate formats, such as multiple languages, large print, Braille, closed captioning, and sign-language interpreting, so that it reaches the whole community, including people with access and functional needs.
- Coordinating with appropriate organizations, including the media, to ensure consistent messaging.
- Monitoring media for information about unaffiliated shelters that may offer animal sheltering for situational awareness purposes.

Strategy Eight: Integrate with Other Plans

During an incident, all impacted agencies, jurisdictions and organizations will activate various plans. The animal shelter plan should address how it integrates with these other plans. Does your plan address the following:

- How other local plans relate to animal shelter operations?
 - Does your plan identify or reference other plans that relate to animal sheltering (e.g., continuity of operations, public information, volunteer and donations management)?
 - Which plans should reference your animal sheltering plan?
- Integrating with other jurisdictions' animal shelter plans to ensure the availability of resources and that they are not overcommitted.

Strategy Nine: Socialize the Plan

After your plan is developed or updated, it should be socialized with agencies and organizations that have roles and responsibilities with animal shelter operations. Does your plan address the following:

- Conducting training and exercises so that agencies/organizations understand their roles and responsibilities.
 - Do other jurisdictions and regional partners participate in your training and exercises?
- Sharing plan actions with the whole community (e.g., media, community groups, voluntary agencies, non-profit entities, key industry partners)?