



QUICK START GUIDE FOR DISASTER PLANNING IN WESTERN PA- ANIMAL FACILITIES

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Evacuation:

1. Dogs- Hang a heavy duty ziplock bag on/near each door of each kennel area. In the bag, place 2 nylon slip leads for whatever number of animals that area will hold. Clearly mark the bag for evacuation use only!!! When evacuating, each dog should have 2 slip leads in case one should break.
2. Cats- It is ideal to have readily accessible carriers for each cat in your facility. A carrier is the safest way to transport a cat. However, in the event that you do not have enough carriers or you do not have time to assemble stored carriers, an alternate way to safely evacuate a cat is to place each cat in a pillow case, tie the top and leave the building. One pillowcase per cat can be stored in an easily accessible, well marked area in the cat kennel. They should be clearly marked for emergency evacuation use only. Once safe, cats should be promptly placed in appropriate housing facilities.
3. Have a meeting place. This will allow everyone to be accounted for quickly. Do not risk the life of a first responder looking for someone who is not in the building, but in another location.
4. If it is not safe to do so, do not re-enter the building to save animals.
5. Smaller animals can be removed in their cages (ie mice, guinea pigs, rabbits). If the cages are not readily removable, small plastic or cardboard containers should be readily available.

Sheltering:

1. Off site sheltering- In the event that you cannot use your facility to house animals, it is a good idea to pre-identify a suitable alternate location. This can be through fostering or another appropriate location. For large numbers of animals an empty building, barn or garage will work. Items to take into consideration:
 - a. Transportation- how will you get the animals to the location?
 - b. Availability of heat or air conditioning
 - c. Location- is it convenient for key personnel? Is it secure?
 - d. Animal cages- do you have any or can you get some quickly?

- e. Water supply
 - f. Food supply
 - g. Communication- have a reliable phone chain in place
2. Sheltering in place- If you can stay in your facility be prepared for loss of utilities such as water, heat, air conditioning and electric. It is a good idea to have available the following items:
- a. Generator
 - b. Water source
 - c. Fans
 - d. Safe source of heat

Veterinary Care:

1. Even if you are a veterinarian or have one that your facility uses, you need to consider the following scenarios:
- a. If you have large numbers of injured animals, can your vet take them all? If not, do you have a back up?
 - b. If an emergency (ie fire) happens in the middle of a Saturday night, do you know how to reach your veterinarian? If not, do you have a back up plan?
 - c. If you are a veterinarian and your facility is unusable, can you relocate animals to a neighboring clinic? This may be a good time to set up a mutual aid agreement (even if informal) to help each other in the event of an emergency.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. However, the steps recommended in the evacuation section are quick and inexpensive to do, and will go a long way to start the preparation process. Please visit http://awic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=3&tax_level=1&tax_subject=185 for a comprehensive guide to disaster planning for your animal facility. This document is lengthy, but there is a quick check list at the end which is very useful. For additional information on disaster planning, please visit www.pasart.us or contact Barbra Karner, VMD, Butler County Animal Response Team coordinator for assistance at barbkarner@zoominternet.net.