SAVING PETS SAVES LIVES

APHIS Animal Care

Ensuring the Safety and Well-Being of Household Pets During a Disaster

The Animal Care program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with providing technical assistance and subject-matter expertise on the safety and well-being of household pets during disasters. In advance of an emergency, this means facilitating household pet emergency management discussions among Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations, as they develop and exercise disaster response plans. During a disaster, APHIS' Animal Care program can provide support to States to ensure the safe evacuation, transportation, shelter, and care of household pets and service animals.

In support of the response planning process, APHIS' Animal Care program provides:

- **Information-sharing opportunities** for exploring best practices with planners across the country.
- **Detailed examples** of effective plan components from various State or local jurisdictions.
- **Training materials** suitable for Federal, State, territorial, tribal, local, and nongovernmental leadership on the emergency management of household pets.
- **Connections to partners** (e.g., veterinary associations, humane organizations, and private sector entities) with shared goals and missions in responding to disasters.
- **Assistance in locating resources** such as training, grants, cooperative agreements, and equipment.
- **Technical support** and subject-matter expertise in identifying best-practice guidelines for use in an animal response plan, including:
  - Public messaging
  - Forecasting response needs, including estimating pet demographics
  - Animal evacuation and transportation
  - Animal emergency shelter assessment and operations
  - Animal decontamination
  - Animal search and rescue
  - Veterinary medical response
- **Opportunities for students,** including temporary employment, internships, and post-graduate work, to gain experience in the emergency management of household pets.

In support of an ongoing disaster response, APHIS' Animal Care program is ready to provide:

- **Support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** and States by leading the Household Pets Support Task Force and ensuring the coordination of Federal resources and national non-governmental organizations with the State.
- **Supplemental staffing** for State and local Incident Command and Multi-Agency Coordination centers.
- **Situational assessment** of a State or community's pet welfare needs.
- **Resource identification** in support of FEMA to expedite filling requests from the State.
- **Technical assistance** to States and localities in protecting the safety and well-being of animals in zoos and aquariums, biomedical research facilities, and commercial pet facilities.
- **Facilitation** in the building of productive relationships between States and key emergency management stakeholders, such as Federal agencies, humane organizations, professional associations, and the private sector.

To learn more about the disaster response role of APHIS' Animal Care program, please call APHIS Animal Care Emergency Programs at (301) 734-0746. For information about APHIS Animal Care's emergency work, please visit the program's Web site at **www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/ep.**

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Animal Care

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