

LEON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN	Reference: STATE CEMP ESF 17	Reference: NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN
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**ANNEX 17
ANIMAL ISSUES**

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ANNEX 17
ANIMAL ISSUES

LEAD AGENCY: Leon County Animal Control

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team
Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross
Tallahassee-Leon Animal Service Center
Big Bend Veterinary Medical Association
Leon County Cooperative Extension
Leon County Volunteer Services
Leon County Sheriff's Office

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to provide for the coordination of local resources in response to small pet, livestock, exotic, and wild animal care needs before, during, and following a significant natural, manmade or technological disaster. Assistance provided under Animal Issues is directed by the Leon County Division of Animal Control (LCDAC) within the Public Works Department.

Animal issues are generally overlooked in the planning process for disasters. This lack of planning, caused by the belief that animals can fend for themselves or because of lack of preparation by owners and others, leads to serious problems when animals are forced from their homes or habitats. By developing operational procedures to care for animals prior to, during and after disasters, the health and safety risks these animals pose to the public can be reduced, animal suffering can be minimized, and we can avert a resource drain on other County departments.

B. SCOPE

LCDAC will provide overall management, coordination and prioritization of countywide animal-related services and resources to support pet, livestock, exotic, and wild animal needs in the event of a major emergency or disaster. Animal-related services under this Annex are categorized in the following functional areas:

1. Conduct rabies control.
2. Assist in the capture of animals that have escaped confinement, or have been displaced from their natural habitat.
3. Assist emergency response teams with animal related problems.
4. Provide humane care and handling of animals before, during, and after disasters by coordinating emergency Medical-Animal Shelters units for the

housing of displaced animals and the emergency medical treatment of those animals.

5. Procure and/or coordinate appropriate equipment and resources for pre- and post disaster sheltering and rescue of animals.
6. Provide emergency care to all sick or injured animals pursuant to applicable laws and protocol.
7. Remove and properly dispose of animal carcasses.
8. Provide information to the general public regarding such issues as quarantine areas, rabies alerts, public service information announcements, Etc.

C. POLICIES

- The primary and support agencies of this annex must plan to be as self sufficient as possible during the first 72 hours following an event, as there may be limited assistance available from other sources.
- The Leon County Division of Animal Control will provide assistance using its primary and support agency authorities and capabilities via coordination with other agencies to support its mission. LCDAC will allocate available resources to each mission based upon priorities identified by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- If animal assistance resources are unavailable, the County EOC will request assistance from the State EOC.
- During disaster planning, response, and recovery efforts, all animal-related services and activities, including rescue, care, housing, relocation, owner redemption, adoption, and medical care, shall be coordinated through the Leon County Division of Animal Control. To ensure compliance with relevant laws and protocols, and to ensure that resources are not diverted from local efforts, all animal welfare groups or rescue organizations must follow the county's policy. No other groups or rescue organizations are authorized to establish response, rescue, or recovery efforts unless they are part of this operation.

II. SITUATION

A. DISASTER CONDITIONS

A significant natural, manmade or technological disaster event would pose public health and nuisance threats, as well seriously impact animals. These threats include injured and displaced animals, dead animals, rabies and other animal-related

diseases, lack of animal care and sheltering, and other animal problems. Additionally, these problems could tax the human needs response and resources.

1. Pre-Impact Response Phase

This phase would be the actual pre-impact care and sheltering of animals, and instructions to the pet-owning public about preparing for the disaster.

2. Post Impact Response Phase

During this phase, animal-related services will become more generalized. Every attempt will be made to verify the need before providing assistance. However, it may be necessary to proceed with assistance on a limited basis before verification is obtained. Additionally, due to the complexity of animal problems, conditions may require special expert advisory groups. These advisory groups will be convened by the Division of Animal Control as needed and will review health, medical, sustenance, and safety information, and will develop specific strategies to manage and respond to these situations.

3. Recovery Phase

Long term animal issues include the return of animals to their owners, to adoptive owners, or to their natural environments, long term public health impact, and proper disposal of carcasses.

B. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

1. Human lives may be lost due to the refusal of owners to evacuate without their pets or livestock. Public education by the county and animal-related organizations is needed to make people aware of pet sheltering facilities available.
2. The large number of homeless or injured pets, livestock, wild animals and exotic animals will require the capture and subsequent sheltering of these animals.
3. Assessment and treatment of sick and injured animals, including euthanasia if necessary, will have to be accomplished through cooperative efforts with the veterinary community at designated shelters and private offices.
4. Commercial animal food must be imported into the county by prior arrangement with vendors. Food drops for wild animals would be organized by various wild animal related groups and state agencies.
5. The accumulation of shelter animal waste and carcasses must be removed to approved solid waste dumping sites.

6. The accumulation of animal carcasses throughout the county must be removed to approved solid waste dumping sites, or burned or buried on site in conformance with applicable laws.
7. Shelter animals will need to be re-united with their owners after the disaster, adopted to new homes, or euthanized.
8. Non-governmental groups, animal rescue organizations, and others, including concerned individuals, will want to participate in the search and rescue, sheltering, relocation, and recovery efforts. This group must include provisions for this participation while ensuring that resources are not diverted from Leon County and that animals are not removed from the area without Animal Control's prior approval. This is especially important for reuniting owners with their lost pets, many of which are removed from disaster areas before owners can search for them.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

All requests for animal-related assistance will be channeled through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). At the time of activation of the EOC, Animal Control will be staffed on a 24-hour schedule to communicate with other agencies and prioritize assistance requests.

B. ORGANIZATION

The Leon County Division of Animal Control Director, or designee at the Emergency Operations Center, is responsible for coordination of all operations. All volunteer animal assistance agencies will coordinate directly with Animal Control.

C. NOTIFICATION

Initial notification will be sent by the Emergency Operations Center to Leon County Division of Animal Control (LCDAC) as the primary agency.

Immediately following notification to activate, the LCDAC will complete the following:

- Assure that necessary emergency operating facilities and reporting systems are established;
- Establish communications with the Emergency Operations Center, obtain status report, and notify the EOC of operations; and
- Provide appropriate representation to the Emergency Operations Center.

Immediately following notification by LCDAC to commence response actions for this activity, each support agency will complete the following:

- Staff animal facilities per the Leon County Animal Disaster Plan;
- Provide for a call down of each agency's staff;
- Provide for on-going needs relative to each agency's designated area of responsibility; and
- Provide personnel and resources for assessment and field teams as required.

D. PRE-PLANNING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. Background

During Hurricane Andrew in South Florida, the impact of animals' problems exacerbated the human disaster. Some residents who refused to evacuate without their pets lost their lives. Injured and dying animals posed extreme safety and health risks to the population and rescue workers. Large numbers of resources had to be diverted from other operations to meet these needs and problems. During the March storm of 1993, some counties experienced the same problems, though on a smaller scale. As a result, Leon County recognized the need to plan for the care and needs of animals and the pet-owning public during the response and recovery stages of a disaster.

2. Leon County Animal Control Group

Understanding the personnel and resource limitations of the LCDAC, a rescue, response, and recovery team should be formed. Membership should include:

- Leon County Animal Control;
- Tallahassee-Leon Animal Service Center;
- Big Ben Disaster Animal Response Team
- Leon County Volunteer Service Center;
- Leon County Humane Society;
- Big Bend Veterinary Medical Association;
- Local Kennel Owners;
- Local Stable and Ranch Operators; and

- Concerned Residents.

In addition, the LCDAC Team will maintain a liaison with the following:

- Leon County Sheriff's Office, Division of Emergency Management;
- Leon County Sheriff's Office;
- North Florida Fair Association;
- Florida Highway Patrol;
- Leon County Cooperative Extension;
- Leon County Public Health Unit.

3. **Public Education**

Information will be provided through the Hurricane Survival Guide, Leon County Animal Control, the Tallahassee-Leon Animal Service Center (TLASC), participating veterinarians, and the news media.

E. PRE-IMPACT RESPONSE PHASE

1. **Sheltering**

a. **Owner Options**

The responsibility for providing safe shelter for animals lies with the owner. Owners who must evacuate are encouraged to make arrangements ahead of time for pet evacuation and are advised of the following options:

- Stay with friends or family members in a safe area;
- Make reservations at a hotel which will accept pets (a list is available from the LCDAC and TLASC);
- Make arrangements to board animal(s) at a kennel or veterinary clinic (a list is available from the LCDAC and TLASC);
- Relocate larger animals to open pasture areas;
- Or as a last resort, either:
 - (1) If evacuating to a Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross shelter, contact LCDAC about bringing the pet(s) to an approved shelter. Boarding

fees may be waived at the TLASC in emergency cases for up to three days after the disaster, or

- (2) Make modifications to your home/property to allow the animal relative safety and leave them at home.

F. POST IMPACT RESPONSE PHASE

LCDAC will immediately identify, mobilize and deploy an assessment team(s) to the disaster area(s) to determine specific health and safety needs and priorities. Animal Control will coordinate with the other agencies represented at the Emergency Operations Center to provide support to aid in the response to animal-related problems.

LCDAC will continue to provide assistance in the following areas: search and rescue of threatened, abandoned or displaced animals; animal sheltering; emergency medical care; feeding; relocation of domestic and wild animals; reunification with owners or adoption to new owners; acquisition of additional food and supplies from vendors to support the relief efforts; dead animal removal; and continued coordination with other agencies.

G. RECOVERY PHASE

Continued care of sheltered animals and provision of an extended network for the adoption of unclaimed animals as appropriate. Reunification of pets with owners. Relocation of sick and injured animals to permanent facilities or euthanasia as needed. Relocation of wild animals to their environments. Return to normal operations.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. PRIMARY AGENCY

The LCDAC is designated as the lead agency and is responsible for the following:

- Notifying, activating, and mobilizing all agencies assigned.
- Coordinating all support agency actions in performance of missions assigned.
- Coordinating requests for assistance and additional resources necessary during performance of the mission with the appropriate agencies.
- Functioning as the County's representative/liaison to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Coordinating rabies control activities.

- Maintaining liaison with the local Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross office for the delivery of services to their clients in need of emergency pet sheltering.
- Facilitating the transportation of injured, stray, or nuisance animals to animal care facilities.
- Assisting emergency response teams with animal-related problems.
- Making arrangements for the removal and disposal of dead animals.
- Coordinating with the Leon County Health Department for the release of public information regarding animal-related health issues.
- Enforcing the animal control laws.
- Impounding animals at large.
- Euthanizing sick and/or injured animals through assigned and authorized persons.
- Coordinating wildlife rescue, care and release with wildlife rehabilitators and the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Conduct at least two evaluations annually to inventory available vehicles, equipment, supplies, materials, and personnel.
- Responding to animal-related inquiries
- Investigating animal cruelty and neglect complaints.

B. SUPPORT AGENCIES (GENERAL)

All support agencies are responsible for the following:

- Notifying, activating, and mobilizing all personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and the response actions.
- Designating and assigning personnel for staffing of all facilities at which this activity is required and providing representation when it is determined by the primary agency to be necessary.
- Coordinating all actions of the support agency with the primary agency when performing the assigned missions.

- Identifying all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.
- Conducting at least two evaluations annually to determine available vehicles, equipment, supplies, materials, and to forward a copy of those evaluations to the LCDAC.