

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION #17

ANIMAL ISSUES

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PRIMARY AGENCY: Pasco County Animal Control

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Agricultural Extension
Community Services
Volunteer Animal Protection Group
Pasco County Veterinarians
Sunshine State Horse Council

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Emergency Support Function (ESF) is to provide for the coordination of local resources in response to small pet, livestock, and exotic animal care needs before, during, and following a significant natural or technological disaster. Assistance provided under ESF 17 - Animal Issues, is directed by the Pasco County Animal Control Division of the Community Services 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, leads to serious problems when these animals are forced from their habitats due to injury and hunger. By developing operational procedures to care for these animals prior to such an event, this ESF will reduce the health and safety risk as well as the resource drain on other County ESF's.

B. SCOPE

ESF 17, Animal Issues, will provide overall management, coordination and prioritization of Countywide Animal Control services and assets to support pet, livestock and exotic 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. Investigate animal bites and provide 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 providing emergency animal shelters as well as treatment/euthanasia assistance stations.

5. Procure appropriate equipment and resources for pre and post disaster sheltering and rescue of horses and farm animals.
6. Provide emergency care to all injured animals.
7. Remove and properly dispose of animal carcasses.
8. Release information to the general public regarding such issues as quarantine areas, rabies alert, public service information announcements, etc.

C. POLICIES

- The primary and support agencies of this ESF must plan to be as self sufficient as feasibly possible during the first 72 hours following an event, as there may be limited assistance.
- ESF 17 will provide animal assistance using its primary and support agency authorities and capabilities, and via coordination with other ESFs to support its missions. ESF 17 will allocate available resources to each mission based upon priorities identified by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Policy Group.
- If animal assistance resources are unavailable within this ESF, ESF 17 will request assistance from the State EOC, through the EOC Coordinating Officer.

II. SITUATION

A. DISASTER CONDITIONS

A significant natural or technological disaster event would pose certain public health and nuisance threats such as injured and displaced animals, dead animals, rabies and other animal related diseases, care and shelter, 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 the animals.

2. Post Impact Response

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 injured, dead, and nuisance animal problems, conditions may require special expert advisory groups. These advisory groups will review health, medical, sustenance, and safety information, and will advise specific strategies to manage and respond to these situations.

3. Recovery Phase

Long term animal issues include the return of animals to their owners or natural environment, long term health recovery, 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 the people aware of pet sheltering facilities available.
2. The large numbers of homeless/injured pets, livestock, and exotic animals, would be a health and nuisance/bite threat which would necessitate a response to address the capture and subsequent sheltering of these animals.
3. Triage and treatment of sick and injured animals to include euthanasia, if necessary, would have to be accomplished by veterinarians at designated shelters and private offices.
4. Commercial pet/livestock food would need to 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 and/or burnt on site.
7. Shelter animals will need to be re-united with their owners after the disaster.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

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

B. ORGANIZATION

The Pasco County Animal Control Manager, or designee at the Emergency Operations Center, is responsible for all activity of the ESF, subject only to the guidance and direction of the Policy Group, and the policies of this plan. All volunteer animal issue agencies, including the Pasco County Animal Protection Group, will coordinate directly with this ESF at the Emergency Operations Center.

C. NOTIFICATION

Initial notification will be sent by the Emergency Operations Center to Pasco County Animal Control as the primary agency of this ESF.

Immediately following notification to activate this ESF, Pasco County Animal Control will complete the following:

- assure necessary emergency operating facilities and reporting systems are established;
- establish communications with the Emergency Operations Center, obtain status report, and notify the EOC Coordinating Officer when ESF is staffed;
- provide appropriate representation to the Emergency Operations Center.

Immediately following notification by Pasco County Animal Control to commence response actions for this ESF, each support agency will complete the following:

- staff facilities as per each individual agency disaster/recovery 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;

- 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 the needs and problems. During the March storm of 1993 in Pasco County, the same problems occurred, though on a smaller scale. As a result, Pasco County recognized the need to plan for the care and needs of animals during a disaster.

2. Pasco County Volunteer Animal Protection Group

Understanding the personnel and resource limitations of the Pasco County Animal Control Division, a volunteer animal protection planning group was formed. Membership includes:

- Pasco County Animal Control;
- Pasco County Office of Emergency Management;
- Pasco County Sheriff's Office;
- Florida Highway Patrol;
- Agricultural/Extension Office;
- Pasco County Public Health Unit;
- Pasco County Humane Society;
- Local Veterinarians;
- Local Kennel Owners;
- Local Stable and Ranch Operators;
- Florida Sunshine State Horse Council Representative;
- And Concerned Residents.

The working group identified three main areas of concern:

- Public education on owner responsibilities and options;
- Sheltering options;
- Post impact veterinary services.

The working group then divided the volunteers into two groups to address these concerns:

- (1) small pet issues, and
- (2) large animals.

3. Public Education

It was determined that the first priority of the working group would be to develop public education materials. After researching the available materials two brochures were developed for distribution:

- *Pasco County Hurricane Animal Protection Guide;*
- and the *Pasco County Country Property Disaster Planning Guide.*

Both brochures are available from Pasco County Animal Control Division, Pasco County Office of Emergency Management, and local veterinarian offices and kennels.

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 Pasco County Office of Emergency Management and Pasco County Animal Control Division);
- make arrangements to board animal(s) at a kennel or veterinary clinic (a list is available from the Pasco County Office of Emergency Management and Pasco County Animal Control Division);
- relocate larger animals to open pasture areas;

- or as a last resort, make modifications to your home/property to allow the animal relative safety and leave them at home.

b. Pasco County Assistance

Because there are some people who will not make arrangements in advance and will not evacuate without their animals, the following contingency plans have been formulated.

(1) Emergency Sheltering

For those persons who are pre-registered with the Pasco County Special Needs Assistance Population Program (SNAPP) and who cannot independently evacuate themselves, much less their pets, the Pasco County Animal Control Division ESF 17 will coordinate with ESF 1, Transportation, and ESF 6, Mass Care, to provide support in sheltering animals belonging to SNAPPs participants. These animals will be placed at the animal control facility in Land O'Lakes and/or possibly at other kennels as space permits. (The American Red Cross does not allow pets in public shelters.) The Animal Control Division, to the extent possible, will pick-up pets from SNAPP client's homes and at ARC shelters and transport them to the Animal Control Facility in Land O'Lakes and/or other participating kennels as space permits.

F. POST IMPACT RESPONSE PHASE

ESF 17 will immediately identify, mobilize and deploy, an assessment team(s) to the disaster area(s) to determine the specific health and safety needs and priorities. ESF 17 will coordinate with the other ESFs represented at the Emergency Operations Center to provide support to aid in the relief of nuisance and health related problems involving animals and their impact on human relief efforts.

ESF 17 will continue to provide assistance in the following areas: capture of injured and displaced animals, sheltering, medical care, feeding, relocation and reunification with owners, acquisition of additional food and supplies from vendors to support the relief efforts, continued coordination with other ESF's for timely and proper carcass disposal.

Standard Operating Procedures for the delivery of these services are being developed.

G. RECOVERY PHASE

Continued care of sheltered animals and provide an extended network for the adoption of unclaimed animals. Relocation of sick and injured animals to permanent facilities. Return to normal operations.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. PRIMARY AGENCY

The Pasco County Animal Control Division is designated as the team leader for this ESF and is responsible for the following:

- notifying, activating, and mobilizing all agencies assigned to the ESF;
- coordinating all support agency actions in performance of missions assigned to this ESF;
- 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) Team for the activities and responsibilities carried out by the primary and support agencies of this ESF;
- investigating all animal bites;
- 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 Pasco County Public Health Unit for the release of public information regarding animals and related health issues;
- enforcing the Pasco County Animal Control Ordinance;
- quarantining bite animals for observation;
- impounding animals at large;
- euthanizing sick and/or injured animals through assigned and authorized persons;
- responding to animal related inquiries;
- investigating animal cruelty and neglect complaints.

B. SUPPORT AGENCIES (GENERAL)

All support agencies of this ESF 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 of the ESF;
- designating and assigning personnel for staffing of all facilities at which this ESF is required, and providing representation when it is determined by the primary agency of this ESF to be necessary;
- coordinating all actions of the support agency with the primary agency when performing the assigned missions of this ESF;
- identifying all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.

C. SUNSHINE STATE HORSE COUNCIL

- Provide a Disaster Animal Relief Team (DART).
- Maintain equipment and resources necessary to manage livestock in a disaster situation.
- Facilitate and optimize the work of DART veterinarians.
- Provide or arrange the transportation of livestock in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Assist in the establishment of housing for livestock and displaced animals.