Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters

Best Practices for Florida — Training Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the Training Guide for *Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters: Best Practices for Florida*. In this guide, we'll explore why pet-friendly evacuation shelters are so important and can help save lives.

We'll also take a look at the practical issues that make a shelter work:
- How to plan a pet-friendly evacuation shelter
- Critical planning decisions that can impact success
- How to conduct media outreach to pet owners and potential volunteers before an emergency
- How the shelter facility should be set up
- How a shelter operates
- How check-out and clean-up should work
- Finding funding for your shelter
- More resources to help you have an effective shelter

Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelter: Defined

A pet-friendly evacuation shelter is a public emergency shelter that accommodates humans and pets in nearby facilities or in different areas of the same facility."

Why are pet-friendly evacuation shelters so important?

Pet-friendly evacuation shelters increase the likelihood that pet owners will evacuate during a public emergency. By getting people out of harm's way, pet-friendly evacuation shelters have the ability to save lives.

Case Study: Hurricane Katrina, 2005

When Hurricane Katrina stormed ashore near New Orleans, Louisiana on August 28, 2005, it became the costliest hurricane in US history, causing $81.2 billion dollars in damage. With a death toll of 1,628 people, it was also the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane that hit south Florida, killing at least 2,500 people.

In New Orleans, many people stayed in harm's way, because pets were not allowed in public shelters and they could not bear to leave them behind. A Fritz Institute survey found that 44% of the people who did not evacuate for Hurricane Katrina stayed, at least in part, because they did not want to leave their pets behind. The South Mississippi newspaper, the Sun Herald, identified seven people who died during or after Hurricane Katrina because they did not want to leave a pet.

Those who stayed behind with their pets saw the city of New Orleans flood after the levees failed, encountered filthy and infested waters, and placed themselves in considerable peril. Abandoned animals left behind were hungry, thirsty, and saw the world they knew collapse. Nurse Valerie Bennett was so distraught over leaving her dogs behind when she was evacuated from a New Orleans hospital, that she offered rescuers her wedding band if they would permit the animals space in the boat. They refused. Valerie and her husband were only permitted to bring one item – the plastic tub holding the medications her husband, a liver transplant patient, needed to survive. Many staff members at the hospital had brought their pets to the hospital to shelter with them. A doctor at the hospital set up a euthanization chamber and began using gas to kill some of the animals left at the facility. About thirty pets belonging to staff at the hospital were placed on the roof and cared for by an anesthesiologist who stayed at the hospital for as long as possible.

During the evacuation of the New Orleans Superdome, television viewers were horrified to see "Snowball," a white poodle, snatched from the arms of his weeping young owner by a police officer as the boy boarded a bus, because the small dog was not allowed on board. The boy was overcome with grief. Snowball has never been recovered.

Animal advocates and officials noted the importance of including pets within individual and community disaster plans. "People must have a disaster plan that includes their pets," said Laura Bevan, southeast regional director for the Humane Society of the United States. "Our best advice is if you evacuate, take your pet with you." The question remained: Where could people go with their pets?

Only a year after Hurricane Katrina, President George W. Bush signed into law the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act which requires that state and local emergency management officials address the needs of individuals with pets and service animals after a major disaster or emergency. Communities all over America are responding to this mandate and creating pet-friendly evacuation shelters.

Apply It to Your Community
Why do many pet owners not want to evacuate without their pets?

What percentage of your community might refuse to evacuate in a public emergency because of concerns about leaving their pets behind?

What kinds of problems do you think could happen in your community if pet owners were to stay in their homes and refuse to evacuate when asked to do so by emergency management officials?

Planning Your Shelter

Starting the Shelter

Local animal control offices or county animal response teams are the most common organizers involved in setting up a pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Animal control offices typically run a jurisdiction's public shelter for un-owned animals and have staffs with extensive experience handling animals. Their staff members are usually employees of the local government.

Animal response teams are public-private partnerships including:

- Government agencies (animal control offices, emergency management agencies)
- Nonprofit organizations (humane societies, animal rescue groups, dog clubs)
- Businesses (kennels, pet supply stores)
- Concerned citizens (volunteers)

Establishing Partnerships

Partnerships are critical to the establishment and successful operation of a pet-friendly evacuation shelter. You will need help from several other organizations to perform the many functions of a shelter. Trust and mutual respect are important parts of building a successful partnership to organize a pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

The first partnership you will want to build is with your local emergency management office. In Florida, there is an emergency management director in every county. In some counties, this is an independent office with its own emergency operations center and staffing. In other counties, another public official, such as the sheriff, may double as the emergency manager. Planning for shelters and designating buildings to be used as shelters usually starts with the emergency manager's office.

It is especially important for the pet shelter organizers to have a strong relationship with the mass care provider, because the pet and human sections of the pet-friendly evacuation shelter are usually funded and operated independently of each other.

Depending on the jurisdiction, the mass care provider may be the American Red Cross, social services, a church, or a school board. Since the mass care provider will often be concerned that the pet shelter staff will rely on them for assistance during an emergency, the pet shelter organizer should be

Basic Partnership

Pet-friendly evacuation shelter organizer

+

Mass care provider

+

Local emergency management agency

+

Owner of the shelter facility

able to clearly demonstrate that the pet shelter will be able to operate independently.

To make sure everyone is clear on their responsibilities, the pet shelter organizer and the mass care provider should consider developing a plan on paper – usually called a memorandum of understanding (MOU) – that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each participating organization. Strong support from local emergency management agencies can go a long way to helping shelter organizers win the cooperation of reluctant mass care providers. For a sample MOU, see the Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team's statement of understanding with the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross's publication, *Pet Sheltering: Building Community Response*, offers helpful information about the American Red Cross's role in emergency pet sheltering.

Pet-friendly evacuation shelter organizers should also coordinate with animal care organizations, private businesses, the media, and nonprofit organizations. All of these groups can provide valuable expertise, resources, and visibility help to promote the shelter. For assistance identifying potential partners in your community, see the Florida State Agricultural Response Team's training course on *Pets and Disasters: Identifying Community Needs and Resources*.

For information on how to gain support for a pet-friendly evacuation shelter proposal, see North Carolina's guidance document on *Finding, Staffing, and Operating a Co-Located Companion Animal Shelter*. You may also want to take the training on the role of voluntary agencies in emergency management, which is offered on-line by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Creating Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for pet shelter operations are an important part of organizing the shelter and winning support from mass care providers and other potential partners. SOPs are simply written descriptions of how you plan to operate the shelter. SOPs are often written in response to questions like "How do we do this?" and "What is the best way to do that?" and "Where do we get such-and-such supplies?" SOPs are very helpful because they let everyone know how to operate the shelter, and maybe more important, they remind everyone how they did things last time. On the other hand, updating SOPS can incorporate lessons learned and make sure you don't do what you did last time!

These SOPs allow shelter organizers to demonstrate that they have established procedures and processes to manage operations. Established

SOPs will help the shelter organizers dissuade fears that the pet shelter would be a burden on human shelter operations.

A shelter SOP should clearly describe the shelter's operations and management structure, including:

- Facility checks before and after shelter operations
- Animal registration and intake
- Shelter rules
- Providing security to staff and animals
- Owner visitation policies
- Staff management and organization
- Animal care and handling procedures
- Roles and responsibilities
- Copies of required forms and documentation

For SOP samples, see the following:

- Connecticut – *Evacuee-owned Pet Management Plan*
- Monroe County (Florida) *Pet-Friendly Special Needs Sheltering Plan* (see section IV for Standard Operating Procedures)

Shelter Staffing

The pet shelter should be staffed by qualified animal care personnel with animal handling experience. Some shelters plan to rely solely on local animal control staff.

Others plan to use groups of trained, registered volunteers from the community or region. Volunteers can be a crucial support for a pet-friendly evacuation shelter. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers on-line training on *Developing and Training Volunteers*.

The Monroe County, Florida's *Pet Friendly Special Needs Sheltering Plan* notes, "Volunteers and residents from the animal lovers community are being encouraged to volunteer their time because their experience with handling pets and caring for them is a valuable resource."

If a shelter organizer plans to use volunteers to staff the pet section of a pet-friendly evacuation shelter, that organization should take measures to register and train these volunteers before an emergency happens. Registering and training volunteers beforehand allows the shelter operator to rely upon a pre-established cadre of skilled volunteers during an emergency. Shelter organizers may want to designate a volunteer

coordinator to manage recruitment, registration, job assignments, on-site volunteer management, and orientation.

Shelter Staff Training

All pet shelter staff members – and volunteers (if possible) – should be trained in basic first aid and emergency operations procedures so they can respond appropriately during a disaster.

FEMA recommends that everyone working at a pet-friendly evacuation shelter have the following training:
- Adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid
- Animal first aid
- Disaster animal response
- *Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)*
- National Incident Management System
- National Response Plan
- *Animals in Disaster, Module A*
- *Animals in Disaster, Module B*

The Florida State Animal Response Team (SART) offers training materials and presentations through its Web site.

Training courses offered through SART that might be helpful for pet-friendly evacuation shelter staff and volunteers:
- *Sheltering Options in Mass Evacuations*
- *Emergency First-Aid for Small Animals*

The Humane Society of the United States offers disaster animal response and emergency animal shelter training courses throughout the year. The three-day *Disaster Animal Response Training (DART)* course is designed to familiarize participants with disaster situations and provide the background necessary to become an effective emergency animal relief responder. The class includes two days of mixed classroom/hands-on instruction and a long half-day of specialized tabletop exercises. After completion of *DART*, graduates will have a basic understanding of disaster response for animals and will be in a position to help develop their own local *DART* teams.

What Animal Species Will Be Sheltered

For logistical reasons, many pet-friendly evacuation shelters restrict the types of animals they will accept into the shelter. Each species has unique food requirements and requires a separate housing area. Shelter organizers need to determine which species of animal will be housed at the pet-friendly evacuation shelter so shelter staff can make plans to accommodate those species and communicate that information to the public, if necessary.

Many jurisdictions plan to limit pet-friendly evacuation sheltering to cats and dogs, which comprise the majority of pets. Limiting shelter availability to cats and dogs reduces the logistical and facility requirements for the shelter. If a pet-friendly evacuation shelter plans to limit the number of allowable species, shelter organizers should establish policies for dealing with pet owners who arrive at the shelter with pets that are not accepted.

If organizers plan to accept animals other than cats and dogs, shelter staff should be prepared to establish separate housing areas for these species that accommodate their specific needs. Reptiles, small mammals, and birds need to be protected from drafts. Reptiles need to be sheltered near electrical outlets that can power their heating lamps and often require daily cage cleaning to reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning. If planning to shelter these types of animals, shelter staff should consult a veterinary or animal care professional for advice about shelter set-up and management. Pet shops, pet supply stores, and specialty suppliers for reptiles and birds can also be useful sources of advice.

Outreach: Telling the Public

Core Messages

First, it is important to communicate directly with pet owners in your community. When pet owners know about the existence of pet-friendly evacuation sheltering in their community, they are less likely to bring animals to shelters that do not accept pets during an emergency.

Second, let pet owners know that the shelter should be their second or third choice, not their first.

Establish ongoing communications that encourage pet owners to do their homework and locate hotels and motels that are pet-friendly. They should be aware of these hotels and motels both in the area and in an area to which they are likely to evacuate. Note that some hotels and motels may change their policies on pets during an emergency.

As an alternative, they could make arrangements at a kennel or veterinary clinic. Again, they should be aware of these options both in the immediate area and in their likely evacuation area. Another alternative is for pet owners to ask friends who are likely to be outside the emergency zone if they can accommodate the owner and the pet – for many people this will be a first choice. People with multiple pets and people with several kinds of pets are most in need of making decisions and plans in advance.

Be honest with people about the limited space that is available in pet-friendly evacuation shelters. Pet owners should be aware that the shelter can be noisy, crowded, and stressful – both for people and animals.

Some jurisdictions have chosen to downplay informing the public about pet-friendly evacuation shelters because these must be a last resort, especially in jurisdictions where funds for these shelters are hard to come by. The public must realize the responsibility they have to plan ahead. Working with local hotels, veterinary clinics, and kennels to promote these locations as a pet owner's first choice is a good idea. In all cases, emergency rescue workers and human-only shelters must be aware of pet-sheltering resources because people will show up at shelters with pets.

Many jurisdictions list the location of pet-friendly evacuation shelters and the requirements on their Web sites. For example, in Sarasota County, pet-friendly evacuation shelter information is available on an on-line map that shows all of the county's shelters. Residents can type in their home addresses and retrieve maps to any of the area's shelters.

Third, and we've already touched on this, all communications should stress pet preparedness. Regardless of where pet owners plan to stay, they should pack a "to-go" kit containing their emergency supplies for their pet. This kit should include vaccination and veterinary records, any medications the animal needs, food, water, bedding, a carrier, and a leash. Work with local veterinarians, pet shops, pet supply stores, grocery stores, big-box retailers – any place where people buy pets or supplies for them – to place preparedness messages and brochures.

An important part of the to-go kit is proper identification of the animal and the owner. Pet owners should take a current photo of the owner holding the pet and place it in a re-sealable plastic bag. The owner's address and contact information, a copy of the pet's vaccination records, the pet's microchip number a business card from the pet's veterinarian should also be added to the ID bag.

Emergency management, local animal shelters, animal care workers, pet shops, and animal supply companies can all be an important part of distributing information. They can help by gathering information on pet-friendly hotels.

Messages about pet-friendly evacuation shelters should always touch on the three points we've just covered:
- A pet-friendly evacuation shelter is available
- The shelter should not be your first choice – do your homework – make plans
- Prepare a kit for each pet and be ready

Getting the Word Out

Getting your message to the public falls into roughly two categories: things you can do yourself and things you want people to do for you. The main point is to spread the word and get people talking. The best advertising is word-of-mouth. Pet-people are very likely to talk to other pet-people about something as important as a pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

One of the simplest things you can do is prepare a flier. You can do this on your home computer or at any shop that rents computer time. These fliers can then be sent to humane society members, pet clubs, and other organizations interested in pet safety during emergencies. You can also place these fliers at pet shops, pet supply companies, and veterinary offices. Be creative; place these fliers at doctor and dentist offices, anywhere where people might pick something up to read. Use the fliers as handouts when

you present information to animal-friendly organizations and enlist their members to distribute more fliers.

Pet-friendly evacuation shelters are something people will want to know about. You may be able to interest local news organizations in your activities. The first step in reaching the media is preparing a press release. Prepare a release that covers the basics of where the shelter is, who can people contact about it, and what people must bring to be admitted. Also include a mention about pet preparedness and planning, as we noted earlier. Include your Web site, if that applies, and tell people how to pre-register. Keep in mind that a press release gives details, but it should also encourage reporters to want to contact you to learn more. Send your press release to local newspapers, television, and radio stations. Develop a list of fax numbers and contact names, so you can get your press release to the right people quickly. You may want to send out a press release offering information and helpful tips every few months to keep the subject fresh on reporters' and editors' minds.

When dealing with television and newspaper media outlets, remember that they will want something they can film or photograph to go along with their reports. You may want to hold a "media opportunity" in partnership with another agency that is assisting with the pet-friendly evacuation shelter's operations, such as a nonprofit organization or the local animal shelter. Media will want to talk to pet owners about how they feel about the pet-friendly evacuation shelter and they may want to take pictures of pet owners with their pets. It may be helpful to have someone pack a to-go kit on air. Scheduling an opportunity for media to get this footage can result in significantly more visibility and awareness.

Public service announcements (PSA) are another way to distribute information to the public about pet-friendly evacuation sheltering and disaster preparedness. PSAs can be prepared in audio format for radio or as video for television. PSAs usually run between 10 and 60 seconds. Newspapers and magazines also run some public service advertising as a public service.

On television and radio, many PSAs run in the evening "graveyard" hours, but don't let this placement fool you. Many people are still watching. Many television stations will not accept PSAs that are not produced by a professional videographer. Some stations will have a news personality tape a PSA on behalf of your organization and use your materials to create the script. Find out what each media outlet offers and tailor your pitch accordingly.

Many radio and television stations have a PSA application process. It's best to apply at least 2–3 months ahead of when you actually want the announcement to run. Although some newspapers still offer PSA placement for a print advertisement, you may get better visibility by approaching the news department and requesting a story.

Public service announcements should use short and upbeat sentences in a conversational tone. A ten-second PSA averages 25 words. A thirty-second PSA averages 75 words. A one-minute PSA averages 150 words. Whatever the length, a PSA should convey information that can help the listener/viewer and ask for action by the audience. The audience should be told clearly where to go or what to do. Provide an easy to remember phone number, email address or Web site address.

When an emergency is declared and the pet-friendly evacuation shelter is preparing to open, it may be important to revisit your communication efforts. News releases about the existence of the pet-friendly evacuation shelter's opening can be pre-written, with just the dates and minimal information changed when an emergency situation is declared. You will want to coordinate media and the management of reporters during the emergency with the mass care provider.

Don't forget to send a thank you note to reporters, editors, PSA directors, and other members of the media who help distribute information about pet-friendly evacuation shelters and what pet owners should do before an emergency. Building goodwill with the media can be a huge benefit to disaster preparedness, fundraising, and recovery efforts.

In the next section, we provide a sample publicity plan that will give you a guide to laying out your goals and then defining the strategies and activities to accomplish them.

Be Ready for the Response

Once you start talking, people may begin talking back! Be ready for the response. If pre-registration was required for owners and pets before an emergency, someone will need to respond to requests for additional registrations. Staff must know what to do if people arrive with pets who are not pre-registered. Who will respond to requests from the media? What if a county commission or city council has questions? If your communications activity is consistent, you will be surprised who it reaches – and who reaches back.

Sample Publicity Plan

Goal 1: Encourage the public to have a personal pet disaster plan.

Strategy 1: Use the Internet to distribute key messages to the public about pet preparedness.

Action step 1: Draft talking points to be conveyed to the public about having a personal pet disaster plan.

Action step 2: Prepare Web site materials that encourage the public to consider pets when assembling their personal disaster plans.

Action step 3: Post a list of pet-friendly hotels, campgrounds, and other locations on a Web site. Include instructions on how to pack a "to-go" kit for your pet.

Strategy 2: Reach out through the news media to distribute key messages to the public about pet preparedness.

Action step 1: Issue a news release based on the talking points (make sure you include the Web site address with the resource materials).

Action step 2: Provide a media opportunity for newspapers, radio stations, and television news crews to get sound bytes, photos, and video footage about the pet preparedness Web site.

Action step 3: Ask a local celebrity who has a pet, to talk about the importance of pet preparedness with the media. Issue this person's tips (based on your talking points) in another press statement and provide a second media opportunity for filming and taping.

Action step 4: Ask a local television station to run a public service announcement (PSA) about pet preparedness.

Goal 2: Inform pet owners about the pet-friendly evacuation shelter's existence and its requirements.

Strategy 1: Finalize and clarify all plans for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter's operations.

Action step 1: Make sure MOUs among partnering organizations are in place.

Action step 2: Draft policies for how pet-friendly evacuation shelter operates.

Action step 3: Prepare Web site materials for pre-registration of pets and owners (if needed) and upload to the Internet.

Strategy 2: Use the news media to communicate with pet owners about the pet-friendly evacuation shelter and its requirements, before an emergency.

Action step 1: Issue a news release about the existence of the pet-friendly evacuation shelter and its requirements.

Action step 2: Provide a media opportunity for newspapers, radio stations, and television news crews to get sound bytes, photos, and video footage. Invite media on a tour of the proposed shelter area, allow them to interview shelter staff, etc.

Action step 3: Ask a local radio station to run a PSA about the existence of the pet-friendly evacuation shelter and its policies.

Action step 4: Ask a local radio station to hold a pack a "to-go" kit day event in a parking lot near a pet store that is broadcast live in partnership with area pet nonprofit organizations.

Strategy 3: Ask pet-friendly and pet service organizations to distribute information to their members about pet preparedness and the pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Action step 1: Send fliers about the pet-friendly evacuation shelter to pet-friendly nonprofit organizations, veterinary offices, kennels, etc.

Action step 2: Provide one-paragraph articles about the pet-friendly evacuation shelter suitable for placing in a print newsletter, an electronic newsletter, or on a Web site for community organizations and pet-friendly groups.

Action step 3: Provide camera-ready fliers about pet preparedness and assembling "to-go" kits to pet-friendly organizations and businesses.

Action step 4: Ask pet-friendly organizations, nonprofit groups, veterinary offices, and kennels to link to your pet preparedness Web site.

Action step 5: Send a letter offering a speaker to the group who will discuss emergency preparedness.
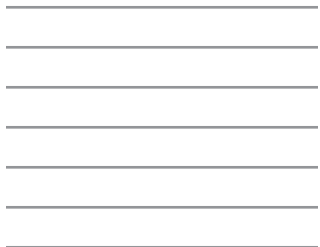
Goal 3: Recruit volunteers to assist pet-friendly staff during an emergency.

Strategy 1: Determine what volunteers will be utilized for during an emergency at a pet-friendly evacuation shelter and how volunteers will be managed and trained.

Action step 1: Appoint a volunteer coordinator.

Action step 2: Define what tasks volunteers may be asked to do at the pet-friendly evacuation shelter during an emergency situation.

Action step 3: Create a list of volunteers who would be particularly valuable to have on-site – such as veterinarians, animal behavior specialists, etc.

Action step 4: Determine what type of training will be mandatory for volunteers. You may want to set up a list of training dates in advance of storm season, so volunteers can review their calendars when signing up.

Action step 5: Decide how potential volunteers will indicate their interest and apply to be involved. Set up materials needed.

Strategy 2: Ask the news media to help you recruit volunteers for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Action step 1: Issue a news release about the need for volunteers for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Action step 2: Provide a media opportunity for reporters and photographers to talk with potential volunteers about why they want to volunteer.

Action step 3: Invite reporters to sit in on an interactive training session with volunteers.

Action step 4: Place community calendar announcements about the training schedule with the newspaper, radio, and television outlets.

Strategy 3: Communicate directly with potential volunteers through the Internet and other volunteer avenues.

Action step 1: Register the need for volunteers with your local volunteer center.

Action step 2: Distribute camera-ready fliers about volunteering to pet-friendly organizations and pet service businesses.

Action step 3: Create a blog on a social networking site to communicate with potential volunteers directly. Post information and training schedules to the blog, and invite potential volunteers to "friend" you or link to your page.

Action step 4: Offer to provide a speaker to pet-friendly organizations who can discuss the need for volunteers and volunteer training.

Action step 5: Participate in a community volunteer fair to encourage sign-ups by potential volunteers.

Fill-in-the-Blank Media Outreach Plan

Goal # 1: _____

Strategy 1: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 2: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 3: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Goal #2: _____

Strategy 1: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 2: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 3: _____

   Tactic 1: _____

   Tactic 2: _____

   Tactic 3: _____

Fill-in-the-Blank Media Outreach Plan (continued)

Goal # 3: _____

Strategy 1: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 2: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 3: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Goal # 4: _____

Strategy 1: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 2: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Strategy 3: _____

    Tactic 1: _____

    Tactic 2: _____

    Tactic 3: _____

Apply It to Your Community

Volunteer Recruitment Work Sheet

This work sheet can help you determine what messages volunteers need to hear before launching a public outreach campaign.

Objective: To recruit _____ (number) of volunteers by _____ (date) to enroll as volunteers for our pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Why would people want to volunteer during an emergency at a pet-friendly evacuation shelter? What motivates people to volunteer during an emergency?

What stops people from volunteering during an emergency?

What training should volunteers have before an emergency?

What positive messages can we say to potential volunteers that will make them want to volunteer? What benefits do volunteers get by signing up?

How can volunteers sign up?

The Shelter Facility

Pet-friendly evacuation shelters can be set up in any location that is suitable for a human emergency shelter. Typically, pet-friendly evacuation shelters are created by developing plans to establish pet shelters in buildings already designated to contain human shelters during an emergency. Buildings often have features such as restrooms, running water, adequate lighting, and electricity – all of which can greatly facilitate shelter operations. Buildings also offer protection if the shelter is going to be used during a weather-related event, such as a hurricane.

Pet-friendly evacuation shelters can also be established at outdoor locations for non-weather-related emergencies or post-disaster sheltering. Outdoor shelters should be established at locations that are open, accessible, and easy to locate – such as a county fairgrounds, parking lot, or sports field. Access to running water is very helpful for shelter operations. Additionally, a military-grade tent can be used in the event of inclement weather to keep humans and animals safer.

Keep Them Separate

The majority of emergency shelters require animal shelters to be physically separate from human shelters. State health and safety regulations generally do not permit humans and pets to be sheltered in the same room.

Separate housing for humans and animals can also prevent injuries and keep people (and animals) safer during emergency situations. Stressed animals are more likely to exhibit violent behavior, so there is an increased risk for injury and potential infection from animal bites and scratches. Housing pets together with humans also poses serious health risks for some individuals, especially those living with compromised immune systems and people with asthma or allergies triggered by pet dander, feathers, or fur.

When locating an animal shelter in the same building as a human shelter, staff and volunteers should take measures to ensure that the facility minimizes these health risks to human evacuees. Shelter staff should consider whether the human shelter and the animal shelter can be established in non-adjacent areas of the building. Shelter staff should also determine whether the human and animal areas would be operating on the same heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, which could spread animal allergens and pathogens to the human shelter.

To provide further guidance on this topic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a fact sheet, *Animals in Public Evacuation Centers*.

The CDC makes the following recommendations that can help in forming pet-friendly evacuation shelter policies:

- The appropriateness of housing pets in public evacuation centers should be carefully considered. Sometimes separate areas can be established for pets. If this is done, then these areas should be staffed with animal care personnel who have been trained in the handling of animals as well as appropriate approaches to infection control. Animal evacuation centers or foster homes may be good alternatives.

- If a pet is kept at a human shelter, it should not be allowed to freely roam the facility and should be kept under control at all times, either via caging or a leash. This is for the animal's safety, as well as that of the people living in the shelter.

- All dogs, cats, and ferrets must have proof of current vaccination against rabies, or be vaccinated upon entry to the shelter.

- Dogs and cats should be treated for intestinal parasites while staying at the human shelter. This is particularly important when the pet is younger than 6 months old.

- Dogs and cats should be treated with medications to kill fleas and ticks. In doing so, care should be taken to administer treatments that are safe for that particular species of animal (i.e., not all treatments that are safe for dogs are safe for cats).

- Furred or feathered pets should be housed in areas separate from people with allergies or asthma triggered by fur, feathers, or dander.

- Cats should be kept in a cage with a litter box that is cleaned frequently (at least once every 24 hours). Pregnant women or immuno-compromised people should not have contact with used litter.

- Dogs should be walked regularly on a leash outside of the shelter to allow them to urinate and defecate in designated areas and any feces should be immediately collected and disposed of. During some emergencies, it is not possible for owners and their pets to go outside. In these situations, an indoor dog relief area, comprised of plastic sheeting in a sealed off room may be set up. Owners should be strongly encouraged to clean up after their pets and the room should be disinfected.

- Anyone bitten by an animal should speak with a healthcare provider to discuss associated concerns (e.g., tissue trauma, infection, rabies risk). Bites and scratches should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. Arrangements should be made to confine and observe a biting dog, cat, or ferret for a period of 10 days.

- People caring for pets in evacuation centers should practice good hygiene by cleaning up after their pets (e.g., disposal of feces) and frequently washing their hands.

- Children younger than five years old should not handle reptiles without adult supervision and they should always wash their hands after doing so. Hand washing should be monitored by an adult.

- Pregnant women and immuno-compromised people should avoid contact with cat feces and with pet rodents such as hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs.

- People should not share food with their pets, nor allow pets to lick their faces.

Coordinating with the Shelter Owner

Before setting up a pet-friendly evacuation shelter, shelter organizers, staff, and a facility representative should conduct an inspection of the animal area to ensure that the space meets basic safety requirements and to identify any pre-existing damage or problems. A documented walk-through will also ensure that the pet shelter staff and volunteers will not be held responsible for any of the facility's pre-existing conditions after the shelter closes.

Pre-occupancy inspections typically confirm or identify:

- Adequate lighting
- Entrance and exit space through all doorways
- Readily available fire extinguishers
- Functioning water and power
- Functioning restrooms
- Non-carpeted floors
- Operational ventilation
- Scratches, scuffs, and damages to floors, windows, walls, and doors

Mass care providers and pet shelter organizers can only use shelter facilities with the permission of facility owners. Owners are mainly concerned that shelter operations not damage the facility and that their facility can reopen immediately after the emergency has ended and the shelter is closed. Pet shelter organizers should develop procedures to protect the facility throughout shelter operations and to quickly restore the facility to its original condition after the shelter's closure.

After shelter operations have concluded, shelter staff and volunteers must thoroughly clean and disinfect all building facilities, including floors, handrails, water fountains, and door knobs. To speed the shelter's closure, shelter-owned equipment such as animal crates and kennels may be removed to an off-site location, where they can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected without delaying the facility's restoration.

Registration & Animal Intake

All pet-friendly evacuation shelters require pet owners to complete registration documentation that releases the shelter from liability and provides identification information for pet owners and their pets. The registration process allows pet shelter staff to document which animals belong to which evacuees, so the staff can return the animals to their correct owners when the shelter closes.

Some communities require potential evacuees to register for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter prior to a declared emergency and the shelter's establishment. Because of limited space, many organizers require pet owners to pre-register in order to have access to a pet-friendly evacuation shelter during an emergency. For example, in Broward County, one pet-friendly evacuation shelter is operated in cooperation with the Humane Society of Broward County.

Jurisdictions with limited pet-friendly evacuation shelter space sometimes choose to pre-register the most vulnerable people to ensure that they are guaranteed shelter space during an emergency. For example, in Pinellas County, space is reserved in pet-friendly evacuation shelters for the people most at risk during a hurricane – those who live in manufactured homes and in the most high risk storm surge zones.

Communities that choose to pre-register shelter occupants should develop contingency plans to handle non-registered pet owners who might arrive prior to or during an emergency. For example, in Pinellas County, non-registered pet owners will be asked to make other arrangements, but will be accommodated at the shelter when tropical storm force winds are imminent. If the non-registered pet owners do not have proper immunization records, their animals will be isolated from the other pets at the shelter.

Shelter organizers may want to use pre-registration to better plan for the number of people and animals who will need to use the pet-friendly evacuation shelter during an emergency. But it's important to remember that pre-registration numbers will often differ substantially from actual shelter usage. Many individuals who pre-register do so as part of a larger disaster plan and do not actually need to use the pet-friendly evacuation shelter. On the other hand, pet owners who do not pre-register, often do not make alternative arrangements and will ultimately need to stay at the shelter. Evacuees, seasonal residents, or travelers from other areas who may not reside in the community may also arrive at the shelter and not be pre-registered. As a result of this behavior, pre-registration numbers can be misleading planning aids.

The intake and registration area is the location where pet owners arrive with their animals and fill out the paperwork necessary to house their pets in the shelter. This area usually includes several tables with chairs and is staffed by pet shelter staff members and volunteers who are there to assist newly-arriving pet owners. The registration area should also include a triage area where shelter staff can perform an initial health assessment of incoming animals and assign them appropriate cages (if cages are not provided by the owners).

The pet shelter's intake and registration area should be located near an entry that can be easily reached from the human shelter. Since shelter evacuees must typically register at both the human shelter and the animal shelter registration desks, coordination between the desks at both shelters is essential.

The main human shelter desk should direct evacuees with pets to the pet shelter intake area. When possible, directional signs should be posted along the way to guide pet owners to the pet shelter entrance. For example, in Marion County, two-way radio communication is used to keep the human and animal shelter registration desks in contact with each other. This allows the pet shelter staff to better prepare for new arrivals and to contact owners regarding issues with their animals. For more information, see Lessons Learned Information Sharing's (LLIS) practice note, *Emergency Animal Sheltering: the Marion County, Florida, Pet-Friendly Shelter's Radio Communications Between Registration Desks*.

The first step in the registration process is to have the pet owner sign a shelter registration and agreement form that outlines the shelter rules and owner responsibilities. The registration and agreement form also typically removes liability from the shelter staff and volunteers from any injury or illness that may befall the pets in their care. Since this form is legal in nature, shelter organizers should consult a local attorney to ensure that the form complies with county, state, and federal laws.

Shelter staff should verbally discuss this form with pet owners to ensure that owners fully understand shelter rules and their responsibilities. After the pet owner has signed the form, shelter staff can give the owner a copy of the form for future reference. This practice can increase the likelihood that pet owners will remember and comply with these rules.

Matching Pets with Owners

Pet owners or shelter staff must also fill out animal intake forms (essentially, animal admission forms) during registration.

Animal intake forms provide pet shelter staff with specific information about the animal being admitted, including:
- Name
- Species and breed
- Sex
- Color
- Distinctive markings
- Age
- Microchip identification number (scanner required)
- Health conditions and required medication

The animal intake information, or an abbreviated version of this information, should be attached to the animal's crate as a "cage card." The cage card should include the animal's identification information, the owner's name and sleeping location, medical information, and behavioral notes for shelter staff. Cage cards provide shelter staff with information needed to deal with the animal in the event of an emergency.

It's a good idea to photograph each animal to document unique characteristics and markings that may not be recorded on the animal intake forms. Some shelters photograph each animal with its owner, so the photograph can also be used to verify the animal's owner during the discharge process. Cage cards and other animal ID can be placed in sheet protectors or re-sealable plastic bags.

How It Works: Shelter Operations

Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is an invaluable tool for organizing and managing the shelter's operations. ICS is a management structure that facilitates command, operational, planning, logistical, financial, and administrative activities. Command personnel should include a public information officer to communicate with the public and a safety officer to monitor the safety of shelter operations. All pet shelter staff (and volunteers if possible) should complete basic ICS training to familiarize themselves with its terminology, organizational structure, and functions.

Shelter managers should take all possible measures to make the command structure clear to volunteers who do not normally work together in their shelter roles. For example, in Hillsborough County the shelter's ICS organizational chart is prominently displayed on the wall as a reference for volunteers and staff.

In addition, color-coded badges are used to identify which jobs each person is qualified to perform:

- Black – Signifies the incident commander and his/her assistant. Duties include all of the below, except for veterinary responsibilities
- Red – All the below, plus handling aggressive or agitated animals and providing medical care to injured or ill animals
- Yellow – All the below, plus duties in the animal sheltering areas, such as animal observation and animal care
- Green – Administrative duties such as shelter check-in, paperwork, set-up, and breakdown.

Shelter Supplies

It's important to be prepared for an emergency and to have on hand the supplies and equipment needed for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

These supplies typically include:

- Administrative supplies
- Animal care supplies (food, litter, bowls)
- Cages or crates
- Cleaning supplies
- First aid/medical supplies
- Signage to guide evacuees

Marion County Pet-friendly Shelter Equipment Purchase List with Cost Estimates

Item	Qty.	Unit Price	Total Price
Home Depot			
Rubber-Maid Brute garbage can, 44 gal. sku# A640-587	4	$34.90	$139.60
Brute garbage can dolly sku#D640-699	4	$26.93	$107.72
1000 Watt Twin Head Promotional Telescoping Worklight sku # 624616	3	$39.00	$117.00
Commercial Electric HD extention 12 gauge X 100ft sku#A528-927	4	$32.91	$131.64
Rubber-Maid 26-36qt Combo Mop bucket with wringer sku#A537-533	2	$39.98	$79.96
Rubber-Maid #24 cotton mop with 60" handle sku# U71228	2	$11.99	$23.98
Spontex Auto & Boat Sponge sku#52701	6	$2.60	$15.60
Apex Heavy Duty hose 100ft x 5/8" sku#A256-587	2	$29.97	$59.94
ZEP Pro-Spray Bottle 32oz. sku#255-852	24	$3.97	$95.28
KIDDE Fire Extinguisher 3A40BC sku#A547-476	2	$19.97	$39.94
Motorolla Talk About T5800 2 per pack sku#C132-556	2	$89.00	$178.00
Maglite 4D Cell with batteries sku#GS4DH06	4	$22.96	$91.84
Ever-Ready rechargeable sku#A456-420	2	$12.48	$24.96
KEEPER heavy duty ratchet tie-down strap 27'x2" sku#A641-846	2	$12.97	$25.94
KEEPER heavy duty ratchet tie-down strap 12'x2" sku#C789-370	2	$15.96	$31.92
Veralite Multi-use 6' folding table sku#A727-330	2	$44.97	$89.94
Indoor / Outdoor folding chair sku#A776-776	8	$14.97	$119.76
Ground Anchor Kit for Storage Building Model: #AK4 (4) SKU: #105331	1	$29.00	$29.00
TOTAL			**$1402.02**

Item	Qty	Unit Price	Total Price
RAND (Catalog J2002-5)			
PO Box 3003			
Pawtucket, RI 02861			
1-800-366-2300			
www.randmh.com			
Corrugated Air Mat 1/4" x 60' Rolls	2	$288.00	$576.00
Page J75 item # J124AR3			
1000 Polyethylene Bags	1	$19.10	$19.10
5 X 10 2 mil thick (waste)			
Page J70 item #J5X10			
	TOTAL		**$595.10**
C Specialties, Inc. (Catalog Volume Five)			
P.O. Box 68591			
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0591			
Fax 1-800-875-7065			
Standard Litter Tray	500	$0.22	$100.00
disposable #2			
Food Serving Trays	1	$26.00	$26.00
1000 count 5x4x1.5 #8FT pg. 6			
Food Serving Trays	1	$34.00	$34.00
1000 count 6.25x5x1.75 #2FT pg. 6			
ID Bands 10" Mixed color	2	$37.00	$74.00
#ID-10 pg.7			
ID Bands 20" Mixed color	1	$41.00	$41.00
#ID-20 pg.7			
Animal Control Pole	1	$87.00	$87.00
#TCP4 pg.28			
Animal Grabber 38"	1	$76.00	$76.00
#AG-T pg. 28			
Handling Gloves	1	$35.00	$35.00
kevlar-cotton knit liners #AG-16 pg.27			
	TOTAL		**$473.00**
Jeffers Pet Catalog (Fall 2002 catalog # 349157)			
P.O. Box 100			
Dothan, Al. 36302-0100			
1-800-533-3377			
fax 1-334-793-5179			
Dolly Base (crate dolly) 42"x24"	12	$60.00	$720.00

Item	Qty	Unit Price	Total Price
KWI			
6 mil 12' x 100' plastic	4	$35.50	$142.00
5 gal. Safety fuel Can w/ funnel	2	$36.60	$73.20
	TOTAL		**$215.20**
Viking Office Supply (Catalog 2003)			
letter size open snap closure	120	$3.99	$480.00
Poly envelopes Page 211 stk g06-174225			
Pet Edge			
PO Box 128			
Topsfield MA 01983-0228			
Fall 2002 Catalog			
The Clipper Cayman Crate	240	$14.99	$3597.60
MR317 Large 25x17x17			
Crate Wheels (sets)	80	$2.99	$239.20
	TOTAL		**$3836.80**
Sparr Building & Farm Supply			
13033 NE Jacksonville Rd			
PO Box 298			
Sparr, FL. 32192			
Attention Butch, per Randy			
622-7063			
Stylette Extra Large Dog Crate	120	$59.50	$7140.00
40 x 27 x 30 w/ wheels			
Resource One			
1202 N. Magnolia Ave			
Ocala, Fl 34475			
contact person Dave Cunningham			
Cell 207-7144			
352-622-4224			
fax 732-5660			
Flex sol Bags on time 60 gal 2 mil 100ct	2	$33.00	$66.00
38x58 Sup x heavy can liners			
DCS 100 5 gal	2	$61.00	$122.00
Knock Out 5 gal	2	$50.00	$100.00
C fold paper towels 24ct/case	2	$25.00	$50.00
	TOTAL		**$338.00**
	GRAND TOTAL		**$15200.12**

Plastic airline transport crates may not provide enough ventilation for animals in non-air-conditioned facilities, especially in a hot climate. However, they do contain animal feces and urine better than wire cages. Wire cages are better ventilated than plastic ones, but do not do a good job at containing animal waste.

Coordinate with the facility owner to identify if any of the building's supplies or equipment are available for use by shelter personnel. Frequently, pet-friendly evacuation shelter staff will not be able to use any facility resources other than the actual floor space and building.

Shelter organizers should determine early in the planning process which supplies the shelter will provide and which supplies it will require pet owners to bring. Some pet-friendly evacuation shelters provide all of the supplies necessary for operating the shelter, which allows these shelters to readily accept and support unprepared pet owners. However, since self-sufficiency is costly, many shelters ask owners to supply their animal's cage or crate, regular medications, water bowl, leash or harness, and toys. Pet owners who bring the requested items will significantly reduce shelter resource requirements. Still many of these shelters maintain backup supplies so they can accommodate pet owners who arrive without these supplies or with supplies not suitable for shelter use.

A trailer may be very useful for storing the equipment and supplies needed for the pet portion of a pet-friendly evacuation shelter. The trailer can be stored off-site and quickly transport equipment to the shelter in the event of an emergency. In Hillsborough County, a supply trailer is used to house supplies and equipment for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter.

Safety & Security

Pet shelter staff and volunteers may be exposed to numerous hazards during shelter operations, including obstructed corridors and fire exits, electrical shock, and hazardous chemicals. Pet shelter managers should require all staff (and volunteers if possible) to undergo a safety training program to mitigate the risk of injury due to hazards.

It's also important to maintain the security of the shelter so that staff, volunteers, pet owners, and animals are kept safe. Controlled substances, such as veterinary medicines, should be secured within locked cabinets or rooms. Access to these medicines should only be permitted to authorized veterinary personnel.

Nighttime operational procedures should also be developed. Doors should be locked at night and staff present around the clock. If the shelter is

going to be open for a significant period of time, shelter managers should consider providing security personnel to maintain a 24-hour presence at the shelter.

Limiting access to the animal shelter to staff and pet owners can improve security and safety for humans and pets. It also reduces the number of people in the shelter, which decreases stress levels for the animals and keeps shelters with limited floor space operating more smoothly. Restricting the presence of children in the animal area can also help prevent potentially dangerous incidents and improve overall compliance with shelter rules.

Access to the pet area can be controlled by asking pet shelter staff to check the identification (e.g. driver's license, state-issued identification card) for each person seeking to enter the animal area. However, this process can be time-consuming and labor-intensive, especially for larger shelters.

In Hillsborough County, owners are given identification wristbands when they register their animal at the registration and intake area. Only one wristband is given to each family to reduce crowding in the facility. The result is controlled access to the animal shelter area for pet owners and staff.

Shelters located in host areas that are not affected by the emergency can implement a check-in/check-out process to allow evacuees to take their animals outside the shelter during the day. Many evacuees will travel outside the shelter during the day and will often want to bring their pets with them. A check-in/check-out process enables staff to track and manage the temporary release of pets.

Animal Health, Housing & Care

Shelter staff should take measures to reduce the presence of pathogens within the animal areas at the shelter and to protect animal shelter staff from zoonotic diseases. Most shelters require owners to verify that their pets have been properly vaccinated by showing copies of their pet vaccination records at registration. If a pet owner neglects to bring vaccination records to the shelter, one option is to have an on-site veterinarian to administer a rabies vaccination for a small fee.

Flea infestations can be particularly problematic, so shelter staff should take measures to combat fleas, especially when animals are sheltered for long periods of time or are being sheltered over dirt floors. An effective treatment program includes initial treatment during animal intake to kill fleas and a shelter-wide application of preventative treatment which should be administered multiple times for long-term shelter operations.

Animals should be carefully examined by shelter staff during the intake process to identify any potentially contagious health conditions. Most shelters reserve the right to refuse admission to animals that appear too ill for the shelter staff's capabilities. If an animal is visibly ill upon admittance, most shelters plan to request the owner to transport the animal to a veterinary clinic for boarding. If this is not possible, the animal may be held in an isolation area until it is possible to transport the animal to an appropriate care facility.

If a pet-friendly evacuation shelter plans to accept animals other than cats and dogs, shelter staff and volunteers should be prepared to establish separate housing areas for these species that can accommodate their specific needs. For example, reptiles, small mammals, and birds need to be housed in areas protected from drafts. Reptile housing areas also require electrical outlets to power their heating lamps and daily cage cleaning to reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning. Shelter organizers who plan to accommodate such animals should consult a veterinary or animal care professional to ensure that the pet-friendly evacuation shelter can meet their needs.

For additional information on animal management and disease control in pet shelters, see *Interim Guidelines for Animal Health and Control of Disease Transmission in Pet Shelters*, published by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Each housing area for animals typically consists of rows and stacks of animal crates or kennels. Each animal housing area should be set up so that shelter

staff and visitors are able to travel unobstructed to the shelter's emergency exits. Shelter staff should consider setting up animal cages so the animals will face away from each other, which will keep the animals calmer and quieter. Some shelters keep crates or kennels at least 12 inches or more apart from each other, if space permits.

Animal housing areas should be established in an area that is easy to clean and disinfect. In many communities, the animal shelter only uses facilities with concrete, tile, or vinyl floors with drainage so that the area can be easily cleaned during operations and completely washed down after the shelter closes. The Marion County, Florida Animal Center lines its animal housing area with plastic so the floor is protected and will retain its polish after the shelter closes.

Shelter staff should designate multiple areas for the animals housed at the pet shelter. Cats and other small animals should be housed in the quietest available sections of the shelter. Separate areas should be set up for dogs and cats, so the barking of the dogs will not agitate and stress the cats.

Separate areas may also be needed for:
• Elderly animals and animals sensitive to noise
• Animals that are too aggressive to handle
• Sick and injured animals
• Animals in heat

A room should also be designated as a "dog relief" area." Indoor dog relief areas typically consist of a room lined with plastic and covered with newspapers. Pet owners are usually responsible for cleaning up after their own animals and laying down fresh newspapers for indoor areas. Shelter staff and volunteers should clean these areas regularly to prevent the spread of disease and to reduce the presence of unpleasant odors.

Pet owners typically assume most of the responsibilities for caring for their animals, unless the owner is prevented from doing so by a disability or other special need. Owners' responsibilities typically include providing their animals with food and water, cleaning their cages as needed, and taking their dogs to the relief area. Pet owners are also responsible for administering all regular medications to their animals. Many shelters require the owner to keep a record of medication administration on the pet's cage card, in case shelter staff members need to care for the animal during an emergency.

Encourage volunteers and owners to underfeed the animals, since both groups tend to overfeed sheltered pets. Overfeeding animals can cause

gastrointestinal upsets. Animals in high stress environments typically require less food than in normal circumstances. If the animal shelter population begins to exhibit frequent signs of gastrointestinal distress, shelter managers should consider switching the animals to a low-residue diet.

Animal shelter staff and volunteers are typically responsible for monitoring the conditions of the animals in the shelter, refilling water bowls as needed, and notifying owners if additional care is needed.

Shelter staff and volunteers are responsible for providing direct animal care if:
- Pet owners cannot travel safely to the pet shelter
- An owner cannot provide adequate care because of a disability or other special need
- An animal becomes ill or injured at the shelter
- The pet owners are being sheltered in an off-site facility
- Evacuees bring abandoned or stray animals to the shelter

Most shelters reserve the right to refuse admittance to animals that appear too aggressive for the shelter to handle. However, even normally docile animals can exhibit aggressive behavior when under extreme stress and discomfort.

Shelter managers should enforce rules to reduce the risk of bites and other injuries:
- Aggressive animals should be handled only by their respective owners or trained staff members
- All animals on shelter property should be leashed or confined at all times
- Pet owners should not handle or touch pets other than their own

Shelter managers should consider posting these rules (and others) on signs throughout the shelter area. This practice helps reinforce the rules and increases compliance during shelter operations.

The use of color-coded cage tags in Hillsborough County promotes safety by clearly identifying an animal's behavior and helping staff and owners minimize the risk of animal bites and other injuries.

- Green cage card – the animal is very friendly in a shelter environment. Shelter staff may add water and walk as needed
- Yellow cage card – the animal may be frightened in a shelter environment. Only designated personnel are permitted to interact with these animals. Yellow cage cards are also issued if the pet's owner was uncertain of how the animal would act in a shelter environment
- Red cage card – this animal is known to be aggressive or fearful of strangers. Only designated personnel are permitted to interact with this animal

Covering animal cages and crates with blankets, towels, or sheets can also reduce stress levels for the animals by decreasing their exposure to bright lights and distractions. However, this may not be practical in hot un-air conditioned environments where shelter personnel must take steps to maximize air circulation.

After: Checkout & Clean-Up

Checkout procedures should be defined clearly for volunteers, staff, and pet owners. Signage spelling out checkout procedures may help guide this process and reassure pet owners waiting to pick up their animals.

This is when earlier systems set up during registration and animal intake pay off. The cage cards, microchip identification scanners, and photos showing pets with their owners are handy, as they can facilitate quickly verifying ownership and returning pets to their rightful owners.

Following animal checkout, shelter staff will need to move cages and equipment out of the shelter facility so it can resume normal operations. In some communities, cages and equipment are cleaned in a separate facility, so this process can be expedited.

Staff and volunteers will need to thoroughly clean and disinfect the animal shelter area. Make sure enough personnel are assigned to these important tasks.

Finding Funding

One of the largest constraints on pet-friendly evacuation shelter development is the lack of funding for the equipment and staffing to run the shelter.

The 2006 federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fund state and local animal emergency preparedness actions, such as the "procurement, construction, leasing, or renovating of emergency shelter facilities and materials that will accommodate people with pets and service animals."

The PETS Act also allows FEMA to reimburse state animal rescue, care, and shelter actions taken in response to a federally declared emergency. The *FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy: Eligible Costs Related to Evacuations and Sheltering*, states: "Eligible animal shelter costs include costs associated with the provisions of rescue, shelter, care, and essential needs (for example, inoculations) for evacuee and rescued household pets and service animals, to include veterinary staff for emergency and immediate life-stabilizing care."

Some jurisdictions have successfully solicited donations of equipment and supplies from nonprofit organizations and area businesses. Volunteer groups, emergency responders, and nonprofit organizations can seek grants from animal-related organizations to help fund pet-friendly evacuation shelter costs. Lists of available grants can be found on-line.

You may also want to consult the *State of Florida Resource and Financial Management Policies and Procedures for Emergency Management*. These guidelines are published by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

American Humane Society – Available Grants
http://www.americanhumane.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pa_shelter_services_grants_available

Foundation Center
http://foundationcenter.org/

Pet welfare and wildlife grants
http://www.fundsnetservices.com/animals.htm

FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy: Eligible Costs Related to Evacuations and Sheltering

http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/9523_15.shtm

State of Florida Resource and Financial Management Policies and Procedures for Emergency Management

http://floridadisaster.org/documents/RFMP.pdf

Apply It To Your Community

How will your pet-friendly evacuation shelter be funded?

Who are potential funding partners for the pet-friendly evacuation shelter?

How will funding resources be pursued?

Resources

Animal Rescue & Animal Sheltering Resources

American Veterinary Medical Association
http://www.avma.org/disaster

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
http://www.aspca.org

Florida Pets – Guide to Pet-Friendly Shelters
http://www.floridapets.net/petfriendlyshelters.html

Humane Society of the U.S. – Disaster Center
http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/

LSU Emergency Animal Shelter Disaster Response Manual
http://lsuemergencyanimalshelter.org/manual%202/LSUManualMay06.doc

North Carolina – Animal Sheltering Resources
http://www.ncagrgis.com/sheltering/

Florida Disaster Management Resources

Florida Disaster Management
http://www.floridadisaster.org

Florida Disaster Animal Response Team
http://www.fldart.org

Florida State Agricultural Response Team
http://www.flsart.org

UF/IFAS Disaster Handbook
http://disaster.ifas.ufl.edu/

Florida – Pet-friendly evacuation shelter Information

Jacksonville
http://www.coj.net/Departments/Environmental+and+Compliance/
Animal+Care+and+Control/Pet+Emergencies/default.htm

Seminole County
http://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/guide/shelters/sheltersmain.asp

Federal Resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency
http://www.fema.gov

H.R. 3858 Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006
http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-3858

Evaluation

Participant's Evaluation of Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters

Please circle the number that best expresses your opinions about the following statements.

Fully Agree = 5   Agree = 4   Neutral = 3   Disagree = 2 Fully Disagree = 1

1. The training module's format was appropriate.

    5   4   3   2   1

2   The information presented is useful to me.

    5   4   3   2   1

3. The time it took to complete this module was acceptable.

    5   4   3   2   1

4. The reasons why planning for shelters for pets in disasters is important were explained fully.

    5   4   3   2   1

5. The factors to consider when establishing pet-friendly evacuation shelters were explained fully.

    5   4   3   2   1

6. Available up-to-date resources were clearly outlined.

    5   4   3   2   1

7. I am better able to support my community in emergency situations with the information presented.

    5   4   3   2   1

8. I learned something new from this training module.

    5   4   3   2   1

9. Name one thing you learned from the module:

10. What did you like about this training module?

11. What would you improve about this training module?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about this training module?

Thank you for your time!

*This pre-test is intended to gauge the level of knowledge that you have **before** participating in Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters training.*

Please answer all the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Why is important to consider establishing a pet-friendly shelter for a community emergency?

2. In pet-friendly sheltering, a pet shelter is operated as part of a human shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

3. Advanced training and organization are not needed to organize a successful pet-friendly shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

4. It is helpful to pets to be separated from their owners during stressful times like disasters.   TRUE or FALSE

5. Having identification systems that connect pets with owners is important in any pet shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

6. List some important considerations for planning pet-friendly evacuation shelters:

7. List some information resources that can help you plan pet-friendly animal shelters:

Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters – Participant Post-Test

*This post-test is intended to gauge the level of knowledge that you have **after** participating in Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters training.*

Please answer all the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Why is important to consider establishing a pet-friendly shelter for a community emergency?

2. In pet-friendly sheltering, a pet shelter is operated as part of a human shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

3. Advanced training and organization are not needed to organize a successful pet-friendly shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

4. It is helpful to pets to be separated from their owners during stressful times like disasters.   TRUE or FALSE

5. Having identification systems that connect pets with owners is important in any pet shelter.   TRUE or FALSE

6. List some important considerations for planning pet-friendly evacuation shelters:

7. List some information resources that can help you plan pet-friendly animal shelters:

1. Why is important to consider establishing a pet-friendly shelter for a community emergency?
    Answers will vary. Although pet-friendly shelters should always be an option of last resort, it's important to note that people are more likely to evacuate when under evacuation orders if they have the opportunity to shelter with their pets.

2. In pet-friendly sheltering, a pet shelter is operated as part of a human shelter.
    False. A pet-friendly shelter is operated separately from the human shelter.

3. Advanced training and organization are not needed to organize a successful pet-friendly shelter.
    False. Advanced training and organization are important for pet-friendly shelter organizers.

4. It is helpful to pets to be separated from their owners during stressful times like disasters.
    False. It may be better for pets (and humans) to be able to comfort each other during stressful times like disasters.

5. Having identification systems that connect pets with owners is important in any pet shelter.
    True. It's very important that an identification system be put in place and used to connect owners with their pets.

6. List some important considerations for planning pet-friendly evacuation shelters:
    Answers will vary, but participants may discuss: available resources and funding, supplies, location, logistics, shelter staff and volunteer training, pre-registration of pets and owners, etc.

7. List some information resources that can help you plan pet-friendly animal shelters:
    Participants may list some of the websites referenced on the presentation slides or in the manual. Additional resources may be listed, such as community organizations that can assist with planning and implementing a pet-friendly shelter.

Photo: iStockPhoto

PowerPoint Slides

The photos in this presentation are thematic and are provided for illustrative purposes only. They should not be taken literally or as instructive. Their intent is to provide an engaging backdrop for the training that will motivate your audience to take action.
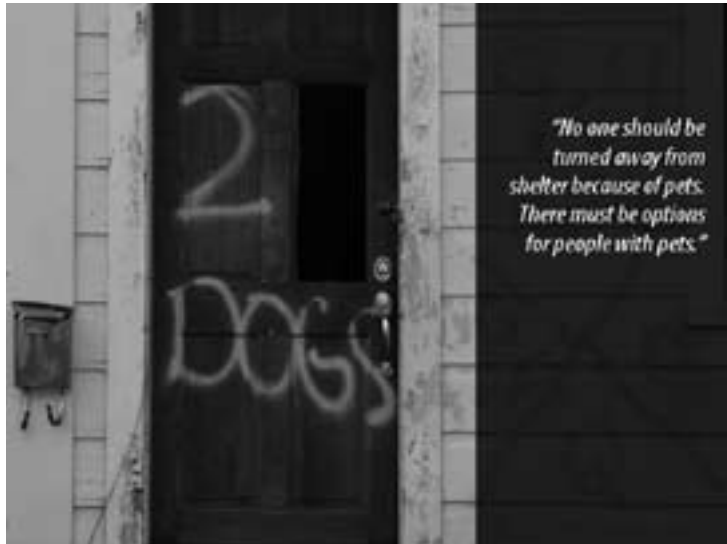

Photo: FEMA News – Andrea Booher

Photo: FEMA News – Liz Roll

"Shelters are like life boats for both you and your pets."
— Craig Fugate, Director, FDEM

Photo: FEMA News – Dave Saville

What is a pet-friendly evacuation shelter?

A pet-friendly evacuation shelter is a public emergency shelter that accommodates humans and pets in nearby facilities or in different areas of the same facility.

Photo: FEMA News – Liz Roll

Why are pet-friendly evacuation shelters so important?

A Fritz Institute Survey found that 44% of the people who did not evacuate for Hurricane Katrina stayed, at least in part, because they did not want to leave their pets behind.

Photo: FEMA News – Michael Rieger

Video: Humane Society of the United States

Photo: FEMA News – Michael Rieger

Photo: FEMA News – Mark Wolfe

Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters

Discuss the different perspectives and expertise each type of partner brings.
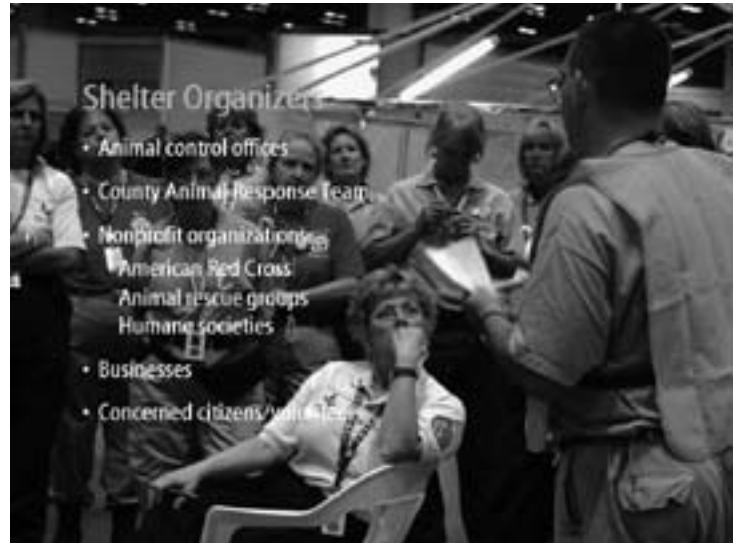

Photo: FEMA News – Jocelyn Augustino

Explain to attendees the importance of securing the support and trust of partners when seeking to establish a pet-friendly shelter. It is especially important for the pet shelter organizers to have a strong relationship with the mass care provider since the pet section and human section of a pet-friendly evacuation shelter are typically operated and funded independently of each other.

Photo: FEMA News – Mary Beth Delarm

Review key points in a sample MOU between a pet shelter provider and a mass care provider (provided in manual).

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Photo: FEMA News – Bob McMillan

Video: Chris Barres, Alachua County Animal Control

Lead the group in discussion about the different approaches to volunteer management and, in particular, the use of convergent volunteers.

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Emphasize the value of each type of training and why it is important for pet shelter staff and volunteers to know each type of information. Mention that the Humane Society of the United States provides disaster animal response and emergency animal shelter training courses throughout the year.

Photo: FEMA News – Bob McMillan

Video: Humane Society of the United States

Dogs and cats are the majority of pets. Reptiles, small mammals, and birds need to be protected from drafts. Reptiles need to be sheltered near electrical outlets that can power their heating lamps, and also need daily cage-cleaning to reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning. If planning to shelter these types of animals, shelter staff should consult a veterinary or animal care professional for advice about the shelter set-up and management.

Photo: FEMA News – Jocelyn Augustino

Mention that pet-friendly evacuation shelter organizers should already be actively communicating with their partners – mass care provider, nonprofits, etc.

Key point to make to other mass care providers: When pet owners know about the existence of pet-friendly sheltering, they are less likely to bring animals to public shelters that do not accept pets (thus reducing delays, misunderstandings, frustration, etc.).

Photo: FEMA News – Andrea Booher

The "to-go" kit should include pet food, water, bedding, a carrier or leash, toys, medications, a photo of the owner with the pet, and the pet's veterinary records. Remember to place items that can be damaged by water into a re-sealable plastic bag.

Photo: FEMA News – Michael Rieger

Encourage attendees to consider the major communication outlets in their communities. Use worksheet provided in packet to chart out a public awareness plan before an incident and for an incident.

Some jurisdictions choose to not communicate their pet sheltering capability to the public. Instead, they ask pet owners to identify and pre-arrange private accommodations and do not advertise a public pet-friendly evacuation shelter (even though one is available).

Photo: FEMA News – Ty Harrington

Video: Chris Barres, Alachua County Animal Control

Emphasize to attendees that typically pet-friendly shelters are established in locations already designated as human shelters during an emergency. Buildings could be schools, churches, or social service agencies. Outdoor sheltering examples could be a fairgrounds, parking lot, or sports field.

Photo: FEMA News – Win Henderson

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Keep Them Separate

- State health and safety regulations do not permit humans and pets to be sheltered in the same room

- American Red Cross shelters (and most others) require animal shelters be physically separate from human shelters

When locating an animal shelter in the same building as a human shelter, make sure the facility minimizes the health risks to human evacuees. Consider if the human and animal shelters are adjacent to each other, or can be established in separate areas of the building. Determine if the human and animal shelters will operate on the same heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, which could spread animal allergens and pathogens to the human shelter.

Photo: FEMA News – Dave Saville

Coordinating with the Shelter Owner

- Inspect the proposed animal shelter area at the facility
- Check for basic safety requirements
- Identify any pre-existing damage or problems
- Document the walk-through and conversation with a memo or use the checklist provided

When doing the walk-through, check for: adequate lighting, ingress and egress through all doorways, readily-available fire extinguishers, functioning water and power, functioning restrooms, non-carpeted floors, operational ventilation, and any scratches, scuffs or damage to floors, windows, doors, walls, or walkways.

Photo: Shutterstock

Registration: Animal Intake

On-site versus pre-registration of pet owners
- Pre-registration is often used in communities with limited shelter space
- Pre-registration can make intake go faster
- Animal immunization and health records can be maintained in a database
- Shelter staff and volunteers must know what to do when non-registered pet owners arrive
- Planners are able to anticipate needs for supplies and space, but pre-registration is not a foolproof planning aid

Example to cite: Pinellas County, Florida reserves space in its pet-friendly shelters for the people who are most at-risk during a hurricane, specifically, those who live in manufactured homes and in the most high-risk storm surge areas. Pinellas County asks non-registered pet owners to make other arrangements for shelter, but will accommodate them at the shelter when tropical storm force winds are imminent.

Important: Many individuals who pre-register do so as part of a larger disaster plan and do not actually need to use the pet-friendly shelter. On the other hand, pet owners who do not pre-register often do not have an alternative plan and will ultimately need to stay in a shelter. Because of this behavior, pre-registration numbers can be misleading planning aids.

Photo: FEMA News – Michael Rieger

Video: Chris Barres, Alachua County Animal Control

Photo: FEMA News — Michael Rieger

Two-way radio communication between the animal shelter and human shelter helps both desks prepare for arrivals. Pet shelter staff are also able to contact owners about issues with their animals. Questions? Consult "Emergency Animal Sheltering: The Marion County, Florida, Pet-Friendly Shelter's Radio Communications between Registration Desks" (referenced in their handouts).

Photo: FEMA News — Michael Rieger
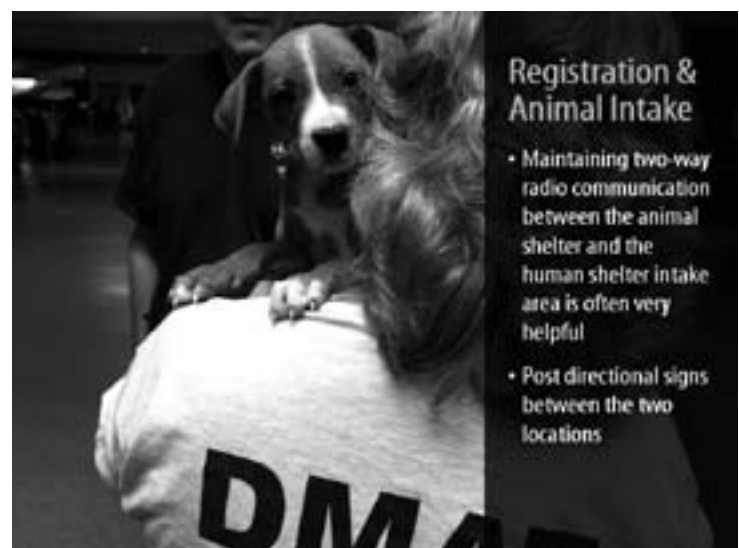
Photo: FEMA News – Bob McMillan

Photo: FEMA News – Leif Skoogfors

Photo: FEMA News – Bob McMillan

Organizing Pet-Friendly Evacuation Shelters

The intake information should be attached to the animal's crate with a cage card.

Photo: Shutterstock

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Emphasize importance of Incident Command System training for staff and volunteers.

Photo: FEMA News – Jocelyn Augustino
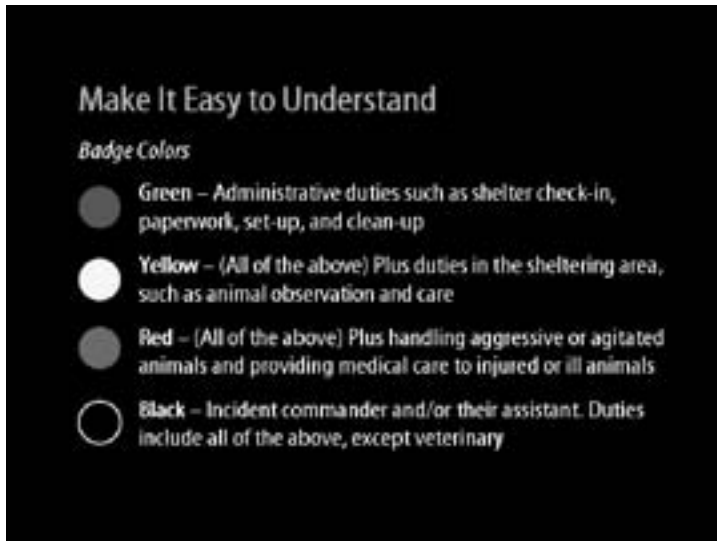
Remember that some supplies may have a shelf life! Remind attendees that determining type of equipment and amount is critical. If planning to shelter 100 animals for 3 days, how much litter, cleaning supplies, and other items will be needed? Remind attendees to coordinate with the facility owner to identify if any equipment on the premises are available for use by shelter personnel. Frequently, shelter staff will not be able to use any facility resources other than floor space.

Photo: FEMA News – Jocelyn Augustino

Photo: FEMA News – Dave Saville

Photo: FEMA News – Jocelyn Augustino

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Suggest a trailer be used to store shelter supplies. Suggest attendees see the resources section in their handouts for links to information about how trailers are managed and funded.

Photo: FEMA News – Win Henderson

Photo: Shutterstock

Photo: Shutterstock

Many shelters reserve the right to refuse admittance to animals that appear too ill for the shelter staff's capabilities. In these cases, owners are asked to make other arrangements. Sick animals can be isolated and then transported to another facility better-equipped for their condition. Shelter organizers may want to make arrangements with nearby veterinary clinics to house sick, injured, or aggressive animals that may be brought to the shelter.

Photo: Shutterstock

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Concrete, tile, or vinyl floors with drainage may facilitate easier cleaning. The Marion County, Florida, Animal Center lines its animal housing area with plastic so the floor will be protected when the facility is used as a shelter for animals.

Photo: FEMA News – Liz Roll

Cats and other small animals should be housed in the quietest available sections of the shelter. Dog barking will stress and agitate cats. Separate areas will keep the animals calmer.

Photo: Shutterstock

Photo: Shutterstock

Video: Chris Barres, Alachua County Animal Control

Photo: Shutterstock

Many shelters require pet owners to keep a record of medication administration on the animal's cage card.

Photo: Shutterstock

Photo: Shutterstock

Most shelters reserve the right to refuse admittance to animals that appear too aggressive for the shelter to handle. Normally docile animals can exhibit aggressive behavior when under extreme stress or discomfort. These policies are very important to ensuring safety for everyone at the shelter. It's recommended that these rules be posted on signs in the animal shelter, so everyone is aware of them. Covering a cage with a blanket, towel, or sheet may reduce some animals' stress levels by decreasing their exposure to bright lights and distractions. This tactic may not be practical in hot or non-air-conditioned environments.

Photo: FEMA News – Michael Rieger

Make It Easy to Understand

- **Red** – Animal known to be aggressive or fearful of strangers; Only designated staff or owners may interact with these animals

- **Yellow** – Animal may be frightened in a shelter environment; Only designated personnel are permitted to interact with this animal

- **Green** – Animal is very friendly in a shelter environment; Shelter staff may add water and walk as needed

This system from Hillsborough County, Florida, promotes safety in the shelter by clearly identifying an animal's behavior through color-coded cage cards. Sometimes, yellow cards are issued if a pet owner is unsure of how the animal will react to a shelter environment.

Photo: Shutterstock

After: Checkout & Clean-Up

Where are we going to go next time?

Cleaning up and thinking through facility issues – like ventilation can help.

Video: Chris Barres, Alachua County Animal Control

In Charlotte County, Florida, the emergency pet-friendly evacuation shelter is financed through funds collected from a 5% surcharge on animal license fees and fines for animal-related offenses.

Photo: Shutterstock

Video: Dr. Randy Caligiuri, Director of Alachua County Animal Services

Photo: FEMA News — Liz Roll

Photo: FEMA News – Mark Wolfe