

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
ANIMAL CONTROL
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Animal Evacuation Plan

Franklin County Animal Control Emergency Operations Plan

Introduction

In disasters, the first priority is the protection of life, property and the environment. Although the protection of human life is the highest priority in an emergency response, recent disasters and follow-up research has shown that proper preparation and effective coordination of animal issues enhance the ability of emergency personnel to protect both human and animal health and safety.

The Franklin County Animal Evacuation Plan is intended as a guide for emergency staff to perform the critical field response support for the safe evacuation and sheltering of animals during a disaster. The plan outlines the procedures to organize qualified teams of volunteers to transport animals to an area that is safe and meets the animal's sheltering needs.

Ultimately, owners of horses, large animals, and pets are responsible for their animal's evacuation and sheltering needs. For this reason, a disaster preparedness section is included in this plan. Animal owners should realize that they might not receive immediate government assistance during a disaster and may be on their own to provide for themselves and protect their property and animals.

State, County, Non-Profit and Private Sector Support

In accordance with SEMS, local authorities maintain control of disaster response and recovery operations. Assistance may come from other local governments, state, and federal governments, non-profits and the private sector. However, all efforts within the Operational Area remain under the direction of the County Office of Emergency Management.

The Florida State Animal Response Team (SART) will coordinate resources and decisions once a disaster escalates to a state-level emergency. When the Town and County exhaust their resources, County will request aid through the Regional Emergency Operations Center. State agencies participating in SART may be called on for assistance when local resources are depleted and no further mutual aid from other Operational Areas is available.

County and local government support to assist with animals is as follows:

- Franklin County Office of Emergency Management
- Franklin County Animal Control
- Franklin County Sheriff's Department

Volunteer and Non-Profits to contact for assistance are as follows:

- Franklin County American Red Cross
- Franklin County Disaster Animal Response Team
- Franklin County Humane Society

Private Sector Groups that may be willing to assist are as follows:

- Apalachicola Bay Animal Clinic-Dr Hobson Fulmer

Florida State Animal Response Team (SART)

Florida Office of Emergency Services and the Florida Department of Food and Agriculture (FDFA) developed SART to coordinate resources and decisions once local governments and the county exhaust their resources. The SART Plan identifies state-level resources and the means by which these resources can be made available to help local government with animal issues during a disaster. The SART participants will activate and

respond to animal rescue, care and shelter, veterinary care and general assistance for animals.

County Office of Emergency Services will contact the Regional Emergency Operations Center who will then coordinate with FDFA to identify and approve requested resources. This is all part of the response strategies of SART as organized within the structure of SEMS.

The County's Animal Evacuation Policy is that:

- Human safety shall outweigh any animal evacuation effort.
- All volunteers must have a reliable means of communicating with the Emergency Operations Center.
- Volunteers shall only perform actions consistent with their skills, abilities and equipment.
- Volunteers shall not impede the efforts of first responder personnel and equipment.
- Volunteers shall not engage in any evacuation effort without the benefit of workers' compensation.
- County's emergency staff to qualify for workers' compensation must activate volunteers.

Mutual aid requests for animal evacuation volunteers registered with the County may originate from County OES or a neighboring agency. A request for the County's volunteers shall receive the approval of the County's Director of Emergency Management or other supervising authority in the EOC. The County shall follow SEMS guidelines when requesting mutual aid from other jurisdictions. Volunteers from other agencies must be registered by the responding agency as Disaster Service Workers specialized in the handling and transportation of large animals. These volunteers should have identification listing their assignment and Disaster Service Worker status.

Volunteers working animal evacuations and shelter sites receive supervision from the director or emergency coordinator and, if present, Franklin County Animal Control staff assigned to an animal shelter or the Disaster Animal Response Team Leader.

Care and Shelter Locations

Franklin County Animal Control has selected locations in nearby counties suitable for sheltering animals on an emergency basis.

The following guidelines should be used when determining shelter locations during a disaster:

- Sites are upwind, upstream and uphill of any potential threat.
- Sites have water and electricity.
- Sites have adequate safety measures to separate various types of animals.
- Sites have adequate ingress and egress for wide trailers and large vehicles.
- Sites have a safe and clear route leading from the point of evacuation.
- Sites have escape routes.

There is no national policy or local or state laws disallowing animals in shelters. The American Red Cross does not allow pets or other animals into shelters they operate. For that reason, this plan was developed to establish animal shelters in advance to expedite animal rescue efforts.

Once the County has established an animal shelter site or multiple animal shelter sites, emergency staff shall contact Franklin County Emergency Operations Center and provide them with the location of the site(s) and description of animals being sheltered. Animal Control will provide staff at each shelter site to assist with medical and feeding needs. Franklin County Animal Control will also provide emergency sheltering at their facility. Emergency staff can contact Animal Control for types of animals that can be sheltered and capacity. Contact Animal Control at 850-670-4733 or Emergency Management Office at 850-653-8977 or Franklin County Humane Society (850) 670-8417.

Evacuations

The goal of an animal evacuation is to safely move the affected animal(s) AWAY from the disaster site to pre-established emergency shelters until the disaster is under control and it is safe to return.

Emergency staff's role in an animal evacuation is to provide qualified volunteers for the handling and transportation of large animals during an emergency to a requesting agency, emergency responder or resident and assist locating safe sheltering. The Operations Section Chief shall coordinate the evacuation effort using the following guidelines and procedures:

1. Operations shall provide up-to-date information to EOC that will be used to determine a safe route to the evacuation site and avoid conflicts with emergency equipment and first responders.
2. Operations shall ensure the roadway leading from the evacuation site to the animal shelter is clear and move volunteers away from hazards.
3. Operations shall ensure the following parties are aware when an animal shelter has been established to deal with large animals and pets:
 - A.) Franklin County Management Office
4. If the animal shelter is not within the County, Operations shall notify the EOC of the jurisdiction where the shelter is located and request information that will assist employees with a safe route.

The Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) shall work closely with law enforcement and fire and rescue personnel in the field and in the EOC during the evacuation. If law enforcement and fire are not available in the EOC, Operations shall communicate with Fire and Law Enforcement Operations at County EOC. Franklin County Emergency Management will provide Cots for sleeping and Mre's b for a source of food.

Disaster Preparedness For Animal Evacuations

During an emergency, the time residents have to evacuate their horses or pets may be limited. With an effective home emergency plan, residents gain additional time to move their horses and pets to safety. Disaster preparedness is important for all animals, but it takes extra consideration for horses and large animals because of their size and requirements for transporting them. It is imperative that Franklin County residents are prepared to move their horses, large animals, and pets to a safe shelter in the event of an emergency.

Small Pets

If residents must evacuate, it is advisable that they take their pets with them. If it is not safe for residents to stay in the disaster area, it is not safe for their pets. Animals left behind in a disaster can easily be injured, lost, or killed. Animals left inside homes can escape through damaged areas, such as broken windows. Animals turned loose to fend for themselves are likely to become victims of exposure, starvation and predators. Their presence can also hinder or complicate emergency response.

It is imperative that residents determine where they will take their pets ahead of time. Here are some recommendations for pet owners:

- Contact their veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities for use in the event of an emergency.
- Identify hotels and motels that accept pets.
- Ask friends and relatives if they would accept their pets during an emergency.

Residents should prepare supplies for their pets. They should stock up on nonperishable ahead of time, add perishables at the last minute, and have everything ready to go at a moments' notice. They should keep everything accessible, stored in a sturdy container that can be easily carried. The disaster kit should include:

- Medications, medical records, and current vaccination records stored in a waterproof container and a first aid kit. A pet first aid book is also good to include.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers to transport pets safely and to ensure that they can't escape. Carriers should be large enough for the animal to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down. The pet may have to stay in the carrier for hours at a time.
- Current photos and descriptions for identification purposes in case the owners get separated from their pets.
- Food and water for three days for each pet, including bowls, cat litter, and litter box and a can opener.
- Pet beds and toys, if you can easily take them, to reduce stress.
- Other useful items include newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items, and household bleach.

Residents should make sure their pets are collared with up-to-date identification. The tags should include pet owner's name, telephone number, and any urgent medical needs. Franklin County Animal Control recommends microchipping pets for the most permanent form of identification. A microchip is implanted in the animal's shoulder area, and can be read at most local animal shelters.

Horse Evacuations

Owners should make arrangements in advance to have horses trailered in case of an emergency. If a resident does not own a trailer or does not have enough trailer space for all their horses, they should make arrangements with other horse owners or organizations to help evacuate their horses.

Residents should know where they can take their horses in an emergency evacuation. They should make arrangements with another horse owner or stables in different locations in County or other stables located outside the County. The disaster may affect

nearby stables or shelters, and will require evacuation to a shelter at an opposite location in County or outside the County.

Horse owners should inform friends and neighbors of their evacuation plans. They should post detailed instructions in several locations-including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer and barn entrances-to ensure the plans are available to emergency workers or volunteers in case the owners are not able to evacuate their horses.

Owners should place horses' Coggins tests, veterinary papers, identification, photographs, and vital information-such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers in a watertight envelope. The envelope should be stored with other important papers in a safe place that can be quickly being reached.

Halters should be kept ready for horses. Each halter should include the following information: the horse's name, the owner's name, telephone number and other emergency numbers where someone can be reached. Other forms of temporary identification, such as neckbands and duct tape with permanent writing will also work. Horse owners should keep identification information with them to verify ownership. Permanent identification such as tattoos, brands, etched hooves or microchips are best.

It is important that horses are comfortable being loaded into a trailer. If horses are unaccustomed to being loaded into a trailer, the horse owner should practice the procedure with their horse. The stress of a disaster and the unfamiliarity of a trailer may be dangerous to the handler and delay the evacuation process.

Owners should be sure to have on hand a supply of water, hay, feed, and medications for several days for each horse being evacuated. A basic first aid kit should be prepared that is portable and easily accessible. A disaster preparedness kit should be assembled and ready to go. The kit should contain:

- Plastic trash barrel with lid
- Water buckets
- Non-nylon leads, halters and shanks
- Leg wraps, horse blanket or sheet
- Tarps
- Flashlight, shovel, sharp knife, wire cutters and hoof pick
- Lime or bleach and fly spray

If residents must leave their horses and other animals, they should leave them in a pre-selected area appropriate for the disaster type. They should leave as much hay, food and water as possible. Residents may not be allowed back into the area for several days.

The leading causes of death to large animals during disaster are:

- Collapsed barns
- Kidney failure due to dehydration
- Electrocution from downed power lines
- Fencing failures

The moment may come when a horse owner or volunteer's life may be put into jeopardy because a horse is too panicked to cooperate with a rescue attempt. Volunteers and owners should be prepared to abandon the horse to its own devices and save themselves. Horses are strong and often survive using their natural instinct for self-preservation.