PLANNING FOR PET OWNERS: WHAT EMERGENCY MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW

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CHAIR, VERMONT DISASTER ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM (VDART)
IMPACT OF DISASTERS ON PEOPLE AND PETS

• Health: death, injury, illness, shock (mental & physical)
• Isolation, disorientation, loss of normal social interaction
• Homelessness, joblessness
• Difficulty obtaining clean food and water
• Loss of clothing and belongings
BAD SITUATIONS MADE WORSE

• No animal control or animal shelter
• Substandard animal control or animal shelter
• Cruelty situations
• Animal hoarders
• Exotic animal facilities/owners with no emergency plan
IMPACT OF NOT PLANNING FOR PETS

- Disease, injury or death of residents and responders
- Intensive relief efforts
- Stress, anxiety, grief, and depression
- Potential media nightmare - emotional issue for public
HURRICANE ANDREW

- First major animal disaster
- People told to leave pets behind
- Homes destroyed, pets escaped in fear
- Disoriented wandering pets, no system to ID and reunite
HURRICANE KATRINA

- Largest animal rescue operation in U.S. history.
- 1,800 people died.
- Thousands of animals died.
- 15,000 animals rescued
- 20% pets reunited.
- HSUS assisted with sheltering of more than 8,000 animals in LA and MS
- Local and national animal groups raised $70 million for pet rescue efforts
Government agencies, non-profit organizations and families were not well-prepared with evacuation plans and services essential to relief and recovery for a disaster of this magnitude.

The reasons 42% stayed behind were more complex than reported.

- Nearly 1/3 (32%) of non-evacuees made the affirmative choice to stay behind for other reasons.
  - Not wanting to leave homes (82%)
  - Not wanting to leave pets (44%)
  - Not wanting to leave relatives (18%)
- Non-governmental organizations (32%) provided the most immediate assistance in the first 48 hours.
SUPER STORM SANDY

(Photo: By Mehdi Taamallah, AFP/Getty Images)
# RESCUE NUMBERS (HSUS)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ocean County</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pocket Pets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iguanas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snakes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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</table>
ON KISWICK STREET, WHERE MR. CONTRUBIS DROWNED, FIREFIGHTER GUIDA CAME ACROSS FOUR MEMBERS OF A STRANDED FAMILY AND THEIR LARGE DOG.

“WE COULDN’T GET THEM IN THE BOAT WITH THE DOG . . . THEY MADE A HEART-WRENCHING DECISION TO STAY WITH THE DOG, AND THEY GAVE US THEIR CHILDREN.” (THE PARENTS SURVIVED.)

“HOW A BEACH COMMUNITY BECAME A DEATHTRAP” THE NEW YORK TIMES, NOVEMBER 11, 2012
Nearly four days after the storm, police officers emerged from a bungalow on Olympia Boulevard carrying two corpses in body bags. Officials were trying to confirm the victims’ full names, but their landlord said they were siblings. The brother, David, was 65, and the sister, Charlotte, was in her mid-70s.

They had died with their dogs, cats, birds, a rabbit and a hamster. If they were unable to evacuate their entire menagerie, they had told the landlord, they were going to stay home.

“How a Beach Community Became a Deathtrap”
Assisting animals in disasters is **not** a question of putting animals above people

- Helping animals is supporting people by taking care of what is important to them
- The human/animal bond is never more important to people than in situations of extreme stress
- Animal issues **ARE** people issues
PET OWNERSHIP STATS

- 62% of households in the United States include animals (164 million owned pets)
- Pets are usually considered “family members” by their humans (by 6 out of 10 pet owners)
- Vermont has the highest per capita rate of pet ownership in the country—71% of households!
- There are more pets than children in the U.S.
HOW MANY PETS ARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
STATE LAWS AFFECTING ANIMALS IN EMERGENCIES

• Immunity from **Liability for Good Samaritan Acts** *(26 VSA, subsection 2405)*
  • Includes emergencies and disasters such as fires, floods, vehicular collisions, etc.
  • Protects laymen as well as veterinarians from civil liability, *except* in cases of
    • Gross negligence
    • Reimbursement for services

• NO. 209. AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY.
  • Adds **animal rescue representative** to local emergency planning committees
  • **Release of liability** for housing pets during disasters and disaster drills
**FEDERAL LAW: PETS EVACUATION AND TRANSPORTATION STANDARDS ACT (PETS)**

**OCTOBER, 2006**

**Mandates** that local and state emergency management officials “take into account the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency” when developing emergency preparedness operational plans.

**Allows FEMA to make financial contributions** to programs or projects “for animal emergency preparedness purposes, including the procurement, construction, leasing, or renovating of emergency shelter facilities and materials that will accommodate people with pets and service animals.”
METHODS AND RESULTS

- Goal was to determine the capacity of Vermont towns for pet disaster preparedness & response, as well as to provide additional resources to assist towns in further planning.
- Six-Question Survey sent to 11 Regional Planning Commissions for distribution to local EMDs.
- 51 survey responses were received.
PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FROM EACH COUNTY IN VERMONT

Survey Response by County (Percentage)

Addison
Bennington
Caledonia
Chittenden
Essex
Franklin
Grand Isle
Lamoille
Orange
Orleans
Rutland
Washington
Windham
Windsor
PERCENTAGE OF TOWNS THAT INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR PET IN THEIR EMERGENCY PLANS

Towns with Provisions for Pets in Emergency Plans (Q2)

- Yes: 38.6%
- No: 47.7%
- Unsure: 13.6%
PERCENTAGE OF TOWNS WHOSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW HOW AND WHEN TO SAFELY EVACUATE WITH THEIR PETS

Towns with Community Members Prepared for Evacuation (Q3)

- Yes: 8.2%
- No: 40.8%
- Unsure: 51.0%
TOWNS WITH IDENTIFIED SAFE LOCATIONS TO WHICH PEOPLE AND PETS CAN EVACUATE

Towns with Adequate Safe Locations (Q4)

Yes - Nearby: 27.7%
Yes - In Human Shelter: 10.6%
No: 31.9%
Unsure: 29.8%
MUNICIPALITIES THAT HAVE ANIMAL SUPPLIES ON HAND FOR USE IN A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY

Municipalities with Animal Supplies On Hand (Q5)

- Yes: 10.0%
- No: 88.0%
- Unsure: 2.0%
MUNICIPALITIES INTERESTED IN RECEIVING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM VDART

Municipalities Requesting Additional Information (Q6)

- Yes: 82.0%
- No: 18.0%
COMMON THEMES

• A majority of Vermont EMDs surveyed:
  • Don’t include pets in emergency plans
  • Don’t have community members prepared to evacuate with their pets
  • Don’t have safe locations to shelter people with their pets (or pets close by)
  • Don’t have supplies on hand to shelter pets
RECOMMENDATIONS

• VDART should continue to be resource to LEPCs and RPCs, and help to identify local animal liaisons.
• Follow up with local EMDs who received Operations Manual to determine usefulness and answer questions
• Repeat survey in 6-12 months
• Target LEPCs 1, 4, 5, 11, and 13 as there were no or few survey responses received from these regions
• Establish working relationships between local EMDs and local animal shelters and Chartered Teams.
**Animal Resources During an Emergency**

**Directions**
- Reach out to emergency contacts. Define responsibilities and how information will be shared.
- Make contact with animal shelters to learn of availability/capacity/needs.
- Make contact with emergency veterinarians.

**Local Emergency Contacts**

Is there a regional Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) that serves your community?  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Person completing this form</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
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<tr>
<th>Regional DART Chair</th>
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<tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Emergency Vet contact</th>
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<tr>
<th>Local Animal Control Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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LOCAL, STATE & NATIONAL RESOURCES

- Local
  - VDART Chartered Teams
    - Chittenden/Grand Isle DART
    - Upper Valley DART
    - Windham DART
  - Rutland Area Disaster Animal Response Team (RADART)
  - LEPC #5 (Central Vermont) DART
  - American Red Cross
- State
  - VDART
- National
  - Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
  - American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
  - Red Rover
  - American Humane
VDART BOARD/ADVISORS

- Private Shelters & Rescues
- Animal Control
- American Red Cross
- CERT
- Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
- Chartered Team Members
- VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
- VT Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security
- USDA/APHIS
VDART HISTORY/MISSION

- Established in 2007 to strengthen and support the state’s capacity to respond to animal needs in the event of a disaster.
- Provides vital educational resources and advice to pet owners, animal-related businesses and non-profits, local communities, and state agencies.
- Provides uniformity and excellence in response to animal needs by
  - training and exercising our volunteers in best practices;
  - supporting the development of regional DART teams throughout the state; and
  - providing local emergency managers with guidance on including the community’s pet population in local response plans.
VDART SCOPE OF ASSISTANCE

- Damage assessment
- Retrieval, evaluation and care for displaced animals in temporary emergency animal shelters
- Veterinary care
- Evacuation support for animals
- Relocation and support for disaster-affected animal facilities
- Assistance at EOC on animal-related issues, donations, volunteer management, and/or media issues
VDART ASSETS

- Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailers
- Chartered Teams & Volunteers
- Operations Manual
  - Standardized Forms
  - Standardized Protocols
  - Activation Procedures
  - Animal Handling Tips
- Website
  - www.VermontDART.org
  - One-stop shopping!
PLANNING

• Review local and state operational plans for animals
• Exercise participation
• Foster development of regional response teams for animals
• Public Education
• Best Practices
REQUIRED TRAINING

- IS – 100 Intro to Incident Command System
- IS -700A National Incident Management System
- IS-10 Animals in Disaster (Awareness/Prep)
- IS -11 Animals in Disaster (Community Planning)
- IS-111 Livestock in Disaster
- Emergency Animal Sheltering Course – Basic
ADDITIONAL TRAINING/EXPERIENCE

- Technical Animal Rescue
- Swift Water Rescue
- CERT Training
- Pet First Aid
- Hazardous Materials Training
- Ice Rescue Training
- Red Cross Disaster Training
- Local animal shelter volunteering
RESPONSE

• Teams can respond locally or statewide
• Work in cooperation with existing response agencies
EXAMPLE OF ANIMAL RESPONSE ORGANIZATION UNDER ICS

Overall Disaster Relief OPERATIONS

Animal Response BRANCH DIRECTOR

Other Activities (Non Animal Related)

Animal Response FINANCE/ADMIN
Animal Response LOGISTICS
Animal Response OPERATIONS
Animal Response PLANNING

Other Activities
(Non Animal Related)
A DEEPER LOOK AT ANIMAL RESPONSE ICS STRUCTURE
ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

- General Provisions
  - DART teams operate under NIMS and ICS at all times.
  - DART teams work under the authority in charge.
  - DART volunteers have same immunity protections as CERT volunteers.
  - Regional Teams may also enter into agreements with their local emergency management officials to respond to smaller scale disasters.
ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

- SEOC Activated/Operational (Partial or Full)
  - IC or EMD contacts SEOC Operations section to request DART services by providing:
    - Name of agency requesting assistance, contact name(s) and phone number(s).
    - Team assignment information.
  - Operations section routes written request to Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM), representing SSF11, for approval.
  - SSF11 approves request in writing and conveys to DEMHS watch officer and VDART.
ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

• SEOC **Not Activated** – **During Business Hours**
  • IC or EMD contacts VAAFM or DEMHS watch officer to request DART services in writing by providing:
    • Name of agency requesting assistance
    • Contact names/phone numbers
    • DART team assignment information
  • State Veterinarian approves request in writing and notifies DEMHS watch officer in writing of DART activation.
  • DEMHS watch officer acknowledges DART activation in writing.
ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

- **SEOC Not Activated – Outside of Business Hours**
  - IC or EMD contacts DEMHS watch officer, who routes request to state veterinarian.
  - State Veterinarian establishes direct contact with requesting IC/EMD and receives request in writing with the following information:
    - Name of agency requesting assistance
    - Contact names/phone numbers
    - DART team assignment information
  - State Veterinarian approves request in writing and notifies DEMHS watch officer in writing of DART activation.
  - DEMHS watch officer acknowledges DART activation in writing.
**ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS**

- **Non-Emergency (Promotional & Training Activities)**
  - DART team provides written notice to State Veterinarian during State business hours and no later than 48 hours prior to the start of the event with the following information:
    - Date and time of event
    - Location of event
    - Nature of event
      - Name of training
      - Purpose of promotional activity
  - State Veterinarian acknowledges event via return email to DART representative and notifies DEMHS watch officer in writing.
RECOVERY

- Short- and Long-Term Foster Care Programs
- Rehoming
- Relocation
“Disasters are the great levelers in the literal and figurative sense. They often bring rich and poor, human and animal, to a common state. Disasters teach us that we are all in this together and by working together we increase the chances that we all will survive.”

Dr. Randall Lockwood, 
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