

Stillwater Area Emergency Pet Shelter Annex

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Introduction

Emergency pet sheltering, also referred to as pet-accessible shelters, is designed to meet the needs of people and their animals during emergencies and disasters. Animal owners are responsible for their animals, and should have a disaster plan prepared for their animals in case of evacuations or emergencies. Still, there will be some situations where emergency animal sheltering is needed such as rapid-onset disasters, massive evacuations where hotels and boarders/vet clinics are full and evacuees who bring their pets with them.

Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to provide guidance for the preparedness, response and recovery structure for the activation of a temporary shelter for pets and livestock during emergencies or disasters, including safe housing, food and water.

Locating emergency animal shelters

Emergency pet shelter locations will be those designated by either the lead Emergency Management Agency in charge of the local response as meeting the safety standards for humans and/or animals. If local government fails to activate or designate an animal shelter the responsibility shall fall to the County, if not the County, the State.

Activation of Pet Shelter Annex

1. If the Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) is activating under the direction of the American Red Cross (ARC), the ARC has sole discretion for determining the need for an emergency pet shelter as well as designating an ARC shelter as a pet-accessible shelter.
2. If the DART is activating under the direction of the Town Emergency Management organizations, the EOC will determine the location of the shelter if it has not already been determined under the preparedness section of this Annex.

Allowable animals

1. Companion animals; such as Licensed companion animals as an example, Seeing Eye dogs are generally allowed to stay in general population shelters with their owner.
2. Domestic pets; Including dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, small mammals (gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits, potbelly pigs) reptiles, fish and arachnids.
3. Livestock; including large animals such as horses, mules, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas and emus will be housed in separate locations identified and pre-arranged by the DART.

4. Animals that will NOT BE ALLOWED include wild animals, exotics, feral animals, poisonous animals and endangered or threatened species or any animal judged to pose a threat to humans or other animals.

Preparedness Activities

- Volunteer staff shall be recruited and trained
- Develop and maintain a call list for eligible staff, and store in go kit
- Appropriate facilities shall be designated, evaluated and placed on a resource list.
- Supplies, equipment, and resources shall be identified and placed on the Resource list in Attachment A
- Identify staff and staffing requirements
- Develop needed forms and develop templates for forms and reports and store in a go kit.
- Develop signage and store in go kit.
- Configure shelter area and walking space plans and store in go kit
- Review and update all documents annually.
- Identify shelter managers and deputy managers.
- Identify waste removal contractor
- Identify resource list for bedding and food supplies
- Develop plan and resource list for photography supplies
- Develop relationship with available veterinarian(s).
- Identify farms or areas to house large animals, document on resource list
- Identify sources of livestock feed.

Response Activities

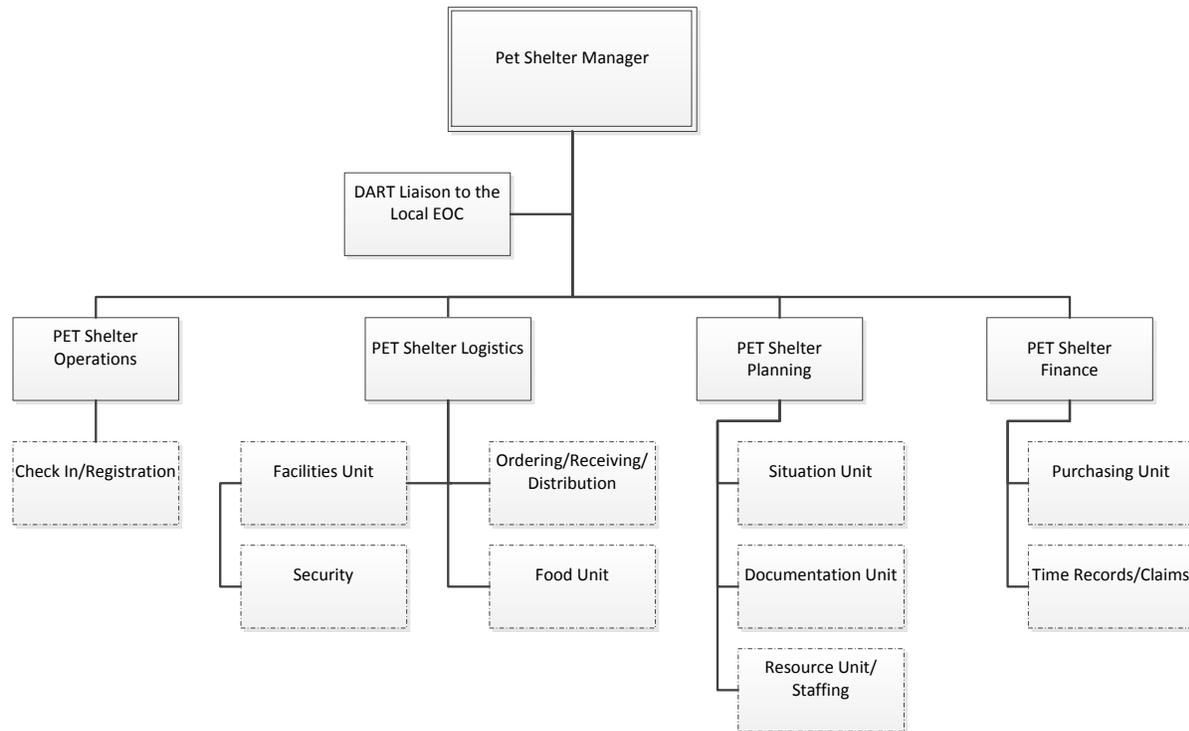
- Participate in pre activation activities and conference calls/meetings.
- Open and set up shelter upon notification
- All assigned staff shall review their job responsibilities
- Prepare shelter for intake and registration

Recovery Activities

- Demobilize pet shelter
- Determine Long Term sheltering needs, if any
- Reallocate resources as appropriate
- Return supplies and equipment to storage facility
- Return shelter to pre disaster condition
- Develop final report and communicate to EOC and Shelter Manager
- Develop After Action Report (AAR), what went right, what went wrong, recommend changes to plan and to operations.

Organizational Charts

General Pet Shelter Organizational Chart



Job Duties and responsibilities

Pet Shelter Manager

- Responsible for overall management of pet accessible shelter
- Initiate set-up of shelter operations
- Supervision of DART staff and volunteers
- Coordination with other agencies (humane societies, rescue groups, Animal Control Officers, vets, boarders, groomers)
- Point of contact for the public
- Maintain log of contacts
- Coordinate procurement/ delivery of supplies with Emergency Operations Center Logistics
- Contact the on-call veterinarian or any other required technical specialist when needed

Logistics Section Responsibilities

- Set up signage and registration area at designated pet shelter
- Inventory facility space and note present current conditions, include photographs

- Configure pet shelter space (dogs, cats, isolation wards, materials)
- Configure and designate pet walking areas
- Provide for needs of DART volunteers
- Set up trash cans, fans, plastic sheeting, crates and supplies
- Provide for trash and waste removal equipment and contractor
- Ensure adequate supplies of crates, food, plastic bags, disinfectant, etc.
- Coordinate with DART liaison for special supply needs
- Coordinate with EOC Operations Section Chief for location if not pre-determined
- Develop plan for demobilization down of shelter, clean-up of area and final check of area
- Return control of area to original owner

Operations Section Responsibilities

- Register evacuees and their animals using appropriate forms
- Take photo of animal with their owner
- Perform animal intake and assessment
- Assign animal to crate and properly label crate with owner ID
- Maintain file of all animals currently in sheltering
- Assist owners when they come to walk/feed/care for pet
- Notify pet shelter supervisor when owners are not caring for pets on a regular schedule
- Coordinate with Veterinarian on-site to deal with pet health issues
- Walk/feed pets whose owners are housed in a shelter that is not local
- Monitor animals for stress/behavior problems
- Monitor supplies, food and environmental conditions
- Assist in break-down and cleaning of shelter and crates

Large Animal Issues

- Direct owners to locations of farms/stables for livestock
 - Refer to Attachment B, resource list
- Coordinate with logistics to provide livestock feed if needed
 - Refer to Attachment B, resource list
- Ensure owner of large animals/livestock are registered at shelter and have completed DART registration and intake forms
- Notify pet shelter supervisor of any problems

Planning Section Responsibilities

- The Resource Unit will work with Operations and Logistics to fill staffing needs for upcoming operational periods.
- Communicate situation reports to DART liaison in local EOC and pet shelter supervisor
- Help with the development of an Incident Action Plan for next operational period
- Gather information on the incident situation and changing conditions

- Coordinate with pet shelter supervisor and DART liaison to determine the number of volunteers and positions to be filled as determined by the pet shelter work load.
- Assist with operation of the animal shelter as required
- File all documents related to the pet shelter operation

Finance Administration Section Responsibilities

- Collect, record and maintain all documents related to cost of operations
- Collect, record and maintain all documents related to staff work hours
- Handle any claims by staff to include reimbursement, injury or pay.

Response Operations

Authority for opening the pet shelter rests with the Stillwater Community Emergency Operations Center in consultation with the Chief Elected Officials and is largely dependent on the activation of a general population shelter. The decision to activate will be communicated directly to the DART liaison or the Pet Shelter Supervisor by the EOC Manager or the EOC Operations Section Chief.

Facility requirements

Prior to using a facility as a pet accessible shelter, a DART member will physically inspect the site and do an inventory of the current condition of the facility, making note of any damage to include photographs, equipment, furniture or materials present as well as cleanliness of the site. For use as a pet accessible shelter, the following requirements must be present:

- Operational water and power
- Adequate lighting
- Ingress and Egress through all doors, including emergency exits
- Facility security
- Functional restrooms
- Staff area separated from the animal spaces
- Non-carpeted floors, washable floor areas.

Registration and Intake area

- The registration area should be located near a strategic entry point easily reached from the general population shelter but should not be a narrow, cramped space.
- Entry point should be clearly signed and, if possible, directional signs to pet shelter intake area shall posted along the way.
- A triage area should be near the registration desk where the intake form and assessment are completed; animals are ID'd, photographed, examined and assigned to the appropriate area.
- If there are language difficulties with pet owners, request an interpreter as a mission request through the local EOC.

- Interpreters may be available through large multi-national corporations or through colleges or universities with international populations.
- Provide a table for owner registration and immediately take a photo of the animal with the owner and attach it to the registration form.
- Pet owners must be officially registered at a local or regional shelter to have their pet in a local DART facility.
- If the local pet shelter is filled up, local residents who may be registered at a different shelter may board their pet locally.
- Designate a space for DART members to fill out the animal intake forms and have a qualified individual perform a health assessment on the animal.
- Pets being sheltered are required to have the following; a carrier large enough to comfortably house the animal, proper ID collar with rabies tag, a leash, proof of rabies vaccine.
 - If there is no proof of rabies vaccine the owner must sign a release to allow a vet to administer a rabies injection and the animal must be quarantined until vaccinated.
- Assign the animal to an appropriately sized crate or kennel and ensure water, towels or bedding is provided. Immediately label the crate with the owner's name and the pet's name and any special needs.
- If the owner brings their own crate, make sure it is clearly labeled with their name, note that on the intake form, and place the crate in the appropriate area.
 - Keep all leashes, collars, food bowls, toys, or bedding that the owner provides with the animal, either inside the crate or directly on top of it.
- Pet owners will be responsible for exercising, feeding, caring and cleaning up after their animals.

Volunteer Coordination

Provide a separate table or area away from the Animal Intake area for DART or animal care assistant volunteer registration. This area should be available for DART volunteers to store personal gear such as coats, bags, DART kits, etc. and should have chairs for volunteers to take rest breaks, eat snacks away from animal areas, and to set up cots for the night shift.

- DART volunteers will fill out a registration form
- DART volunteers will be issued identification
- DART volunteers will wear a some type of designated identifying clothing or vest.
- DART Volunteers will check in/check out with pet shelter supervisor
- DART volunteers will have access to general population shelter provided snacks, food and water.

- Walk in volunteers will be accepted upon proof of capability and ability to be credentialed.

Signage

- Clearly mark all doors to the area as “DART pet shelter”
- Clearly mark one door for “Animal Intake”
- Post DART policies and procedures for pet shelter care and feeding.
- Designate and clearly post a “dog walk” area,(flagging is best)

Animal Areas

- No animal will be outside its crate/kennel without a leash and identification tag.
- Only designated DART volunteers or animal owners will be allowed to remove any animal from its crate/kennel.
- Species should be separated (dogs/cats/birds) as well as those animals with special needs, those that are sick, under stress or are aggressive.

Dogs

- If space permits, crates or kennels should be 12” or more apart.
- Crates should be oriented to keep animals facing away from each other.
- Provide food and water bowls, ID tags, leash, and bedding for each crate.
- For dogs sensitive to noise, activity or other dogs; provide a sheet to keep the sides of the crate covered.
- The dog area should be close to an exit door to facilitate reaching dog walk areas
- Provide all owners with plastic bags for clean-up each time they walk their dog.
- if necessary, because of weather or dangerous conditions, a dog walk area can be created indoors in a separate room.
- Assign a DART volunteer specifically for maintaining this area.
- Provide separate areas for dogs that are sick and for those without proof of vaccinations.
- Dogs that are seriously ill or pose a health risk to others should be transported to a local vet. Contact the on-call DART vet for assistance.
- Aggressive animals must be securely contained.
- The owner will be responsible for care and feeding of an aggressive animal.
- If the owner does not have a muzzle, provide one for the duration of the stay in the shelter.
- DART staff may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive.
- Isolate dogs that are in heat.

Cats

- Cats should be kept in separate area from dogs, in the quietest part of the area away from doors and other activity.
- Cats that are sick or without proof of vaccination should be kept separate.
- Provide food and water bowls, ID tags, and bedding for each crate.
- Provide kitty litter boxes in an area where owners can take their cats out of the crates for exercise and/or feeding or provide a litter box inside the crate.
- Litter boxes should be cleaned regularly.
- Isolate cats that are in heat.

Birds

- Designate an area for birds away from drafts and temperature extremes.
- All birds must be in cages, fully ventilated. Provide food, water, ID tag and newspaper for all cages.
- Contact a DART member with bird expertise or a member of a local Avian Society to assess the bird and the bird area location.
- Cages may accommodate up to three birds if the birds are socialized, free of disease and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide a sheet to cover the birdcage to deter noise and cover at night.

Ferrets

- Ferrets must be current in rabies vaccinations
- Cages may house up to 3 ferrets if they are socialized, free of disease, and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide food, water, ID tag and bedding for each cage
- Cages must be of sturdy construction, chew-proof and deep enough to allow for appropriate bedding.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

Small Mammals

- All small mammals are to be kept in cages at all times.
- Provide food, water, ID tag and bedding for each cage.
- Cages must provide ample mobility and be well ventilated.
- Cages or containers must be chew-proof.
- Provide odor inhibiting bedding material such as wood chips or shredded paper.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

Reptiles

- Reptiles should be kept in a separate area from other animals.
- Locate reptile area near electrical outlets for portable heaters.
- Reptile cages should be cleaned daily to prevent risk of salmonella.

- Provide each cage with food, water, ID tag and bedding if required.

Arachnids/Spiders and/or insects

- If possible locate arachnids and insects away from other animals
- Provide water and ID tag for each cage
- Owner will be responsible for feeding and providing any food, bedding or natural materials required.

Large Animals

- Large animals or agricultural stock will be better accommodated in a farm like setting outside of the disaster affected area.
- Horses will be separated according to proof of negative Coggins test and stallions housed separately from mares and geldings.
- Owners are responsible for transporting agricultural stock.
- DART staff will assist owners by directing the owner to nearby farms or stable identified for sheltering livestock.
- Only DART staffs that are familiar and experienced in large animal handling will be assigned to these tasks.
- Animal Intake forms, photographs and assessments should be conducted before the animal is boarded.
- If weather conditions permit, owners should travel to the farm or location to feed and care for large animals.
- If travel conditions do not permit, arrangements should be made for a DART member or farm owner to feed and care for the animal.
- For assistance with sheltering agricultural animals contact the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets through the County Office of Emergency Management or the Cornell Cooperative Extension's, Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)

Operational Policies and Procedures governing operation of pet shelter

- DART members functioning as DART liaison, Pet Shelter Supervisor or Operations manager should have completed DART training.
- DART volunteers must be at least 18 years old.
- DART staff will be credentialed and wear identification.
- The pet shelter supervisor is in charge of the operation of the pet accessible shelter and has the authority to set shelter specific rules, approve variances to DART policies, dismiss volunteers, determine staffing levels and refuse to accept animals.
- Only pet owners and DART staff may remove animals from crates.
- Unless needs dictate, owners are responsible for administering all medications to pets.
- Pets in emergency pet shelters will not have contact with other pets.
- Owners will be asked to provide proof of vaccinations such as a shot record or rabies tag: this will be noted on the registration and intake forms.

- During disaster or evacuations, it is recognized that pet owners may not always remember to bring proof of rabies vaccination or bordella shots.
- The registration forms will indicate that the pet owner accepts the risk of boarding their pet in the emergency pet shelter.
- Only DART staff, Emergency Management Officials, pet owners, shelter personnel and building maintenance workers will be allowed inside the pet accessible shelter.
- The pet accessible shelter will be locked at night.
- When the shelter is populated, at least two DART staff will be present at all times.
- The pet shelter Supervisor will devise and post an emergency evacuation plan for the pet accessible shelter in case of fire, severe weather or power failure.
- Pet owners must be officially registered in a Local general population shelter in order to place their pet in the pet accessible shelter.
- If a general population shelter facility with a pet accessible shelter is at capacity, local evacuees officially registered at a regional shelter may board their pet with proof of registration.
- Pet owners will feed, walk and care for their own animals. The exception will be those owners who are not staying at an adjacent general population shelter.
- Animals will be fed once a day and walked at least twice a day.
- Pet owners who do not adhere to the minimum care schedule will be notified to remove their animal from the shelter.
- Each crate, kennel, food or water bowl will be cleaned and disinfected before being used for another animal.
- New bedding provided for each new animal.
- The DART staff will perform regular “poop Patrol” walks to ensure pet owners have cleaned up the dog walk area
- The DART Shelter Supervisor will immediately inform the Local EOC Operations Section of any problems with the building, security, shelter population or hazardous situation.
- The facility will be left as clean or cleaner than before the pet shelter was set up.

Demobilization of Shelter

- Authority for closing the pet accessible shelter rests with the Operations Section Chief or the EOC Manager.
- That decision will be communicated directly to the DART liaison or the Pet Shelter Supervisor.
- Once the decision has been made to close the shelter, break down can be initiated and may if necessary, be phased in over time if some animals are still in residence. The Pet Shelter Supervisor may request the DART liaison to call extra volunteers to assist in break-down if needed.
- In lieu of DART staff, other volunteers may be used if they are available.

- Once owners have checked out all the pets in the pet shelter, all remaining crates, kennels and cages will be broke down and removed from the facility, cleaned, disinfected and properly stored for the next event.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of crates and kennels can occur on or off-site as appropriate.
- All crates, materials and supplies will be removed from the facility and plastic sheeting will be taken up.

Facility Clean up

- All floors will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Any furniture, tables or shelves used for holding crates and animals will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.
- Handrails, water fountains and doorknobs will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.
- Trash receptacles will be emptied and bagged trash placed in designated dumpsters.
- Facility restrooms will be cleaned and trash emptied.
- The Pet Shelter Supervisor will have the building manager physically inspect the building before leaving and correct an discrepancies noted.
- Cages, crates and kennels will be cleaned and disinfected before returning them to lenders.
- DART crates will be cleaned and disinfected before storing in DART cache.
- All towels, sheets and bedding will be laundered with detergent and bleach prior to storing in watertight containers in the DART cache.

Inventory

- All DART materials, including forms, supplies safety equipment and vests will be inventoried and returned to the DART cache. Food will be stored in watertight containers or redistributed as appropriate.

After Action Report

The pet shelter supervisor with input from staff shall submit a report to the Emergency Management Coordinator and list the number and types of animals sheltered, an assessment of operations with emphasis on shortfalls or gaps, lessons learned and recommendations for changes to the Animal Shelter Annex.

Documentation

- All documents shall be organized and turned over to the Documentation Unit of the Planning Section of the Shelter or at the local EOC.
- Documentation of the incident shall include but not limited to all registration and animal intake forms, photos of pets and owners, volunteer registration forms, incident logs kept by the pet shelter supervisor or DART liaison.
- All receipts for purchases and associated documentations will be turned over the Finance Administration Section of the Local EOC.

- It is appropriate and recommended that thank you letters be sent to those who provided assistance with the operation and maintenance of the pet shelter.

Close-out meeting

The DART Liaison and the Pet Shelter Supervisor will attend the EOC after action meeting to help assess management of the incident and identify problems or shortfalls and make suggestions for plan updates.

Long Term Sheltering

In some disasters, response and recovery operations may stretch into weeks or months. Most DART teams, being volunteers, are not prepared or able to continue operate an emergency pet shelter for a long period of time.

Alternatives to be considered for long term shelter operations:

1. Boarding animals at a vet clinic and private kennels. This may be the only option for aggressive animals that can't be fostered. Post-disaster, as private kennels and vet clinics begin to reopen, arrangements may be made for long term boarding, which will serve as an economic stimulus within the community.
2. Fostering in the local community. DART teams and animal care organizations have been working to develop extensive lists of people willing to foster animals, typically members of their local humane society. Humane societies and county animal shelter volunteers form the backbone of this effort. Fostering animals for people made homeless by a disaster is designed as a long term but still temporary measure. Pet owners will retrieve their pets as soon as they are in housing where they can care for them. Fostering programs need to be designed with care, with a list of possible foster homes determined as a preparedness activity.
3. Moving animals from an emergency shelter to a county shelter in another location where there is space for the animals. This effort has included shipping adoptable shelter animals from a local shelter to locations nationwide in order to reduce the population at the animal shelter and could possibly make room for boarding the pets of a disaster affected people until they can care for their own pets.
4. Tasking the care for pets to the County or ultimately the State EOC to determine what assistance is available through government agencies or mission assigned to regional, state or national organizations.

ATTACHMENT A

ATTACH LIST OF CURRENT DART EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

RESOURCE CATEGORIES and CONTACT INFORMATION: (to be further sub-divided and filled in)

1. Food
2. Feeding and watering supplies
3. Bedding
4. Disposal supplies
5. Disposal Contractors
6. Animal Cages
7. Fencing
8. Tools
9. Clean up and disinfectant supplies
10. Animal medical supplies
11. Personal protective equipment for staff

ATTACHMENT B

DART SUPPORTING RESOURCE LIST – ATTACH HERE

List of items required to minimally supply a pet shelter of average population