

Massachusetts Emergency Support Function 17

**ANIMAL PROTECTION**

**Primary Agency**

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

**Support Agencies**

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Department of Fish and Game  
Animal Rescue League of Boston  
United States Department of Agriculture Animal  
and Plant Health Inspection Service

Department of Environmental Protection  
Massachusetts Office of Law Enforcement (Environmental Police)  
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association  
Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (Team-1)

**I. INTRODUCTION**

A. Purpose

The purpose of MAESF-17, *Animal Protection* is to provide for the coordination of federal, state, local, private and voluntary resources in response to both privately owned and wild animal care needs before, during, and following a significant natural emergency/disaster or man-made event or animal health emergency.

B. Scope

MAESF-17 provides for the overall management, coordination and prioritization of statewide resources to support owned or wild animal needs in the event of an emergency/disaster. MAESF-17 functions are in concert with State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex as highlighted below:

1. Address human health risks associated with animals;
2. Assist in the capture/rescue of animals that have escaped confinement or have been displaced from their natural habitat;
3. Provide emergency care to injured animals;
4. Provide humane care, handling and sheltering of animals before, during and after emergency/disasters;
5. Issue and enforce animal disease quarantines;
6. Remove and dispose of animal carcasses properly;
7. Release information by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Public Information Officer, to the general public, regarding such issues as quarantine areas, rabies alert, public service information announcements, etc.

## **II. POLICIES**

- A. Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), through the State Veterinarian/designee as Team Leader will coordinate and direct the activities of MAESF-17, Animal Protection.
- B. MAESF-17 will coordinate animal assistance resources using primary, support, and adjunct agencies.

## **III. SITUATION**

### **A. Disaster Condition**

The animal population in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts surpasses the population of humans. Owners are ultimately responsible for their animals' care and housing in an emergency. All personal family or business emergency plans should include taking care of pets or animals in case of a disaster.

A significant natural or man-made emergency/disaster could quickly overwhelm local government resources and their capability to provide necessary services. An emergency/disaster of this magnitude will pose certain public health and nuisance threats such as injured and displaced animals, dead animals, rabies and other animal related diseases, care and shelter of animals and other issues. Such an emergency/disaster necessitates the need for a plan to mitigate the situation utilizing State and/or Federal assistance.

### **B. Planning Assumptions**

1. All appropriate Massachusetts State agencies and departments will be involved in emergency operations, consistent with their functions and responsibilities, with respect to emergency/disaster animal issues.
2. Coordination with local governments and other MAESF's will be required to successfully meet emergency needs.
3. MAESF-17 will assist in the impact assessment process as needed or required.
4. State, local and federal governments, private sector and volunteer agencies assigned responsibilities involving emergency/disaster animal issues will have established operating procedures specifying their emergency support service actions and will be able to communicate and coordinate these actions in an emergency to best utilize available capabilities.

#### IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

##### A. General

The decision to implement the Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex of the State CEMP shall be coordinated with MEMA. It is assumed (but not required) that the following activities have occurred prior to activation.

1. The local government has taken all necessary actions to respond to the emergency prior to requesting assistance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. Local government has called upon its local resources, implementing mutual aid and cooperative agreements for additional services and personnel.
3. Upon request from (MEMA), the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will make available its agency liaison(s) to report to the State EOC for coordination and implementation of animal protection related requests for assistance.
4. The agency liaison person(s) will staff MAESF-17 work station, identify which support agencies for MAESF-17 are needed, and take the necessary steps to assure that support agencies are activated or placed on standby, as needed.
5. As the primary agency for all activities under MAESF-17, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will then ensure that all agencies assigned to MAESF-17, in coordination with MEMA, will respond to requests for assistance.
6. All support agencies and organizations will be notified and tasked to provide 24-hour representation as necessary. Each support agency and organization is responsible for securing sufficient program staff to report to and support the State EOC and to carry out the activities tasked to their organization on a continuous basis.
7. Individuals representing organizations that are staffing the State EOC should have extensive knowledge of the resources and capabilities of their respective agencies and organizations and have access to the appropriate authority for committing such resources.

##### B. Organization

1. MAESF-17, Animal Protection, will organize under the leadership of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, through the State Veterinarian/designee. Personnel assigned to the State EOC from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will provide daily direction for all assigned missions. The Department of Agricultural Resources, in coordination with MEMA, shall develop an organizational structure for directing, planning, implementing, and monitoring mission assignments from MEMA according to the MAESF concept.
2. Several agencies provide support for MAESF-17. Although the composition of the support agencies for MAESF-17 will likely change as a result of the planning process it is anticipated that these agencies will constitute the base for providing assistance to local governments following a major disaster or catastrophe. There are additional adjunct agencies listed in the Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex. Adjunct agencies provide specialized assistance for specific tasks.
3. MAESF-17, Animal Protection, primarily coordinates with the "Health and Welfare Branch MAESFs" for the purpose of tracking missions assigned to the MAESFs which include MAESFs 6, Mass Care; 8, Health Medical Services; 11, Food and Water, and 15, Volunteers and Donations.

C. Notification

1. In the event of an emergency or disaster, the primary agency will be notified by MEMA.
2. The primary agency will notify support agencies and request the assistance of MEMA as needed.

D. Response Actions

1. Initial Response Actions

- a. The State Veterinarian/designee will notify the appropriate support agencies to begin mobilization of resources and personnel and to commence operations.
- b. Immediately following notification to activate the response phase of the annex, the State Veterinarian/designee will complete the following actions commensurate with emergency priorities within the state and based on the availability of resources:
  - 1) Provide appropriate representation to the State EOC;
  - 2) Maintain communications with the State EOC, obtain status reports, and keep the State EOC informed of progress.
- c. Immediately following notification by the State Veterinarian/designee to commence response actions, each support agency will complete the following actions:
  - 1) Staff facilities in accordance with each agency's disaster recovery plan;
  - 2) Provide for replacements of each agency's staff;
  - 3) Provide for on-going needs relative to each agency's designated area of responsibility;
  - 4) Provide personnel and resources for field assessment and response/recovery teams as necessary.
- d. The State EOC will be staffed on a 24-hour schedule to interface and communicate with other agencies and prioritize response/recovery assistance requests.
- e. All volunteer agencies not referenced above will coordinate directly with the MAESF-17 and MEMA (MAESF-5) as necessary.
- f. MAESF-17 will coordinate with federal ESF counterpart as needed.

E. Recovery

1. MAESF-17 will identify, mobilize, and deploy assessment team(s) to the emergency/disaster areas to determine the specific animal health and safety needs and priorities. MAESF-17 will coordinate with other MAESF primary and support agencies represented at the State EOC to provide support to aid in the relief of nuisance and health related problems involving animals and their impact on human relief efforts. MAESF-17 will request assistance from adjunct agencies as necessary.

- 2 MAESF-17 will continue to coordinate assistance in the following areas:
  - a. Capturing of injured and displaced animals;
  - b. Sheltering, medical care, animal husbandry, relocation, reunification with owners;
  - c. Acquiring of additional food and supplies from vendors to support the relief efforts;
  - d. Coordinating with other primary and support agencies for timely and proper carcass disposal.

F. Responsibilities of the Support Agencies

1. General Responsibilities

- a. Report to the State EOC as directed by the primary agency or MEMA, as appropriate.
- b. Develop written procedures to implement the responsibilities delineated in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and the Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex.

2. Specific Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of primary, support and adjunct agencies/organizations are identified in the Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex.

**V. REFERENCES**

Massachusetts Emergency Animal Annex