

## **Emergency Support Function # 17**

### ***Animal Protection Annex***

Primary Agency: Maryland Department of Agriculture

Support Agencies: American Red Cross

#### **I. Introduction**

##### **A. Purpose**

To outline the program and activities designed to ensure that care and sheltering needs of animals are met.

##### **B. Scope**

1. Animal Protection includes educating the farm community about emergency preparedness, disseminating guidance to animal owners, and coordinating medical and shelter arrangements with veterinary practitioners and kennel operators.
2. Potential operations include: tracking occupancies at boarding facilities, coordinating the emergency provision of essential medical supplies and drugs, ensuring supplies of food are adequate at boarding facilities, and providing grief counseling to victims who lose pets.

#### **II. Operating Principles**

##### **A. Situation**

1. MDA has developed guidance to educate and assist pet owners and to facilitate effective preparedness and response activities that safeguard the lives of pets.
2. For the purposes of this document, a domestic pet implies a cat or dog.
3. Disaster situations may require citizens to evacuate their homes, and individuals or families with pets may be forced to seek shelter or refuge at facilities that prohibit pets. Mass care facilities and shelters for citizens do not permit animals other than those used for special assistance.
4. During an emergency evacuation, a pet owner may seek extended care for pets in a facility other than the pet's home.

5. During short-term absences by their owners, despite emergency circumstances, pets usually can remain safe at home when supplied with adequate amounts of water and appropriate food and when restricted to a secure space.

## B. Concept of Operations

1. The American Red Cross will work cooperatively with MDA to ensure a coordinated effort is undertaken that provides for the basic needs of owners and their pets.

2. A mutual aid program that incorporates pet food and equipment suppliers as well as veterinary professionals will be implemented during emergencies to provide assistance to local governments and citizens.

3. A roster of veterinary hospitals, kennels, and boarding facilities that will participate in the sheltering of domestic pets during disaster periods will be developed and maintained and shared with appropriate state or local agencies and other organizations.

4. Rules and regulations for the emergency care and sheltering of pets will be developed and shared with administrators of participating animal shelter facilities.

5. A series of emergency aid stations will be established throughout the affected area to provide medical treatment and relief to injured pets.

6. A system will be implemented to capture, house, and care for runaway pets, and to publicly announce the list of participating facilities, for a reasonable period following an emergency event, in an effort to reunite animals and owners.

7. Grief counseling will be available for individuals traumatized by the loss of a pet.

8. Appropriate state and local agencies will be notified when the program is activated. Local media also will receive notification and will be encouraged to publicize the program.

9. Participating facilities, agencies, and media will be notified when the sheltering program has ceased and guidance regarding the orderly retrieval of pets will be made available to the public.

10. Local emergency management agencies will be encouraged to become familiar with the program and the participating animal shelter facilities in the jurisdiction and cooperate in efforts to disseminate information about the program.

11. Local emergency management agencies will be encouraged to assign a staff member to monitor the implementation of the program and manage requests from the public.

## C. Organization

### 1. Agriculture, Department of (MDA)

Act as the lead organization for the ESF team.

- i. Act as the Team Leader and the team's primary contact with media as well as the team's representative in policy discussions, conferences with ESF teams, and other matters.
- ii. Act as the coordinating agent for all animal protection personnel, develop operations assignments, and direct deployment, in cooperation with team members.
- iii. Develop team procedures and policies, as necessary, in cooperation with team members.
- iv. Ensure team members receive shift-relief from their respective organizations at appropriate intervals, as additional personnel are available.
- v. Establish liaison with ESF 5 to facilitate the sharing of information and data.
- vi. Collect, compile, and report information and data, as appropriate.

### 2. American Red Cross (ARC)

- a. Implement agreements with public agencies and private organizations to open shelters, and provide staff to perform "shelter" services.
- b. Cooperate with state and local officials to issue news releases and broadcast public service announcements to advise the public of appropriate items to bring to shelters.
- c. Coordinate with MDA to publicize guidance for the care and sheltering of domestic pets.



