Pet Friendly Shelters

Providing Safe Haven for People and their Pets
History

Hurricane Andrew 1992

- 700,000 people evacuated
- 80,000 housed in shelters
- 175,000 people homeless
- 25,000 homes destroyed
- 100,000 homes damaged
- $20 billion in damages
- $10 billion cleanup costs
Personal Losses

- Home
- Job
- Friends
- Security
- Pets
Animal Issues in Andrew

- People told to leave pets behind when evacuating
- Homes blown apart – pets escape in fear
- Disoriented pets wander away from home area
- No ID on pets
- No system for animals
MASH Animal Compound

- Created by The HSUS & Citizens Against Pet Overpopulation
- Operated 6 weeks
- Mostly volunteer workforce
- Support from Army: supplies, full-time vet, tents, security
Animal Statistics of Compound

- 600 lost, foster or owner give-up animals taken in
- Approximately 2,000 seen by emergency vets
- Most lost pets never matched with owners
- 30 day holding period before adoptions
Tornadoes
Hurricane Floyd
Evacuation Nightmare

- Estimated 2 million people evacuated from FL, GA, SC & NC
- 2 hour road trips took 18 hours
- Hotels & Shelters full
- Not enough places for pets & large animals (horses)
Impact of Not Planning for Pets

- Risks of disease & injury to residents and emergency responders
- More labor-intensive relief efforts
- Stress, anxiety, grief, and depression
- A potential media nightmare - emotional issue for public
Individuals with companion animals...

- Won’t evacuate or delay evacuation if animals are not taken with them.
- Attempt to re-enter residential areas during & after evacuation to retrieve pets
- Will not seek shelter if animals not cared for also
Human Animal Bond

- About 60% of all households in the United States include animals.
- Most households have more than one pet.
- Pets are usually considered FAMILY MEMBERS by their humans.
Making the Connection

- Assisting animals in disasters is not a question of putting animals above people
- Assisting animals is about 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
The Weyauwega Story

“Weyauwega made it very evident that people place such value on their pets. Not just dogs and cats. We’re talking goldfish, lizards, birds—they place such a value on them that they are willing to risk their lives to get them out. We as public servants can’t ignore that message.”

– Al Shanks, Deputy Administrator, Wisconsin Emergency Management
Old Message

Leave your pet behind with 3 days of food & water because human evacuation shelters don’t allow pets!
New Message

If you evacuate:
Take pets with you! If it is dangerous for you, it is dangerous for them!
Options for Families
Evacuating with Pets

- Hotels / Motels
- Friends
- Family
- Boarding Kennels / Veterinary Offices
Why Pet Friendly Shelters are Needed

- Do not want separation from pets
- Some pets do better with owner taking care of them
- Cannot afford the cost of staying in a hotel/motel or boarding fees
- Cannot find a hotel/motel that allows them to keep pet
- Family and friends may also be displaced or disaster victims
Note:

*Pet friendly shelters should be the last resort for animals owners. There are health concerns due to the crowding together of animals. There is noise and other stress-inducing problems that may impact animals.*
Types of Pet Friendly Shelters

- People and their pets in the same room
- People and their pets in the same building, but in separate area
- People and their pets are located in separate buildings of varying distances
Keep People & Pets Close Together

- Allows animal owners to take care of their own pets
- Is less stressful on both the animal and owner
- Allows the pet shelter to operate with a minimum of staff
Pets & People in Same Room

- Least labor intensive since owners are responsible for feeding, exercising, & clean up of their animals
- Shelters develop rules outlining their policies, such as removal of animals from crates & clean up of animal waste

Example: Volusia County, FL; Charleston, SC
Note:
The public should be told that the evacuation shelter allows pets. If anyone is uncomfortable around animals or has allergies that could present a health problem, they could be directed to a non-pet facility.
People & Pets in Same Building

- Animal owners in same building, but separate area - still provide for their own pets
- Slightly more labor intensive because owners not immediately available to care for pet
- Qualified animal care workers on hand to care for animals when owners can’t

Example: Alachua County, FL; Macon, GA
People & Pets in Separate Places

- People & animals located distance away
- More labor intensive – qualified animal handlers provide care for pets
- Owners may not help because of conditions or lack of transport

Example: Bainbridge, GA, Santa Fe, NM
Temporary Animal Shelter

May contain more than owned animals:

- Rescued / found pets
- Owner give-ups
- Fostering requests
- Veterinary emergency hospital

Example: Dade County, FL
Work with Human Care Agencies

- Already experienced at providing mass care for people
- Can provide training in operating sheltering facilities
- Can assist pet owners with referrals to pet friendly or temporary animal shelters
- May provide supplies such as cots, food, water
Facilities

- Should meet the standards of safety set by emergency management
- Should be conducive to housing animals – solid, non-porous floors
- Should be free of other obligations during declared emergencies. A clause in the contract should allow for cancellation in times of emergency
Staffing

- Qualified animal care staff with animal handling experience
- Vet *(optional, but ideal)*
- Vet or Animal Health Tech
- Volunteers – set up, daily cleaning, registration, pet visit scheduling, enforcement of shelter rules, manage feeding areas, close down
Security

- Provided 24/7 for protection of staff, volunteers, pet owners & animals
- Restrict persons in shelter
- Pet owners show ID to visit pets (*unless known*)
- No one person alone in facility
- Volunteers pre-screened
Pet Owner Responsibilities

Should be educated already about pet supplies needed

- Animals in crates or cages large enough to stand, sit and turn around
- Have a supply of food, water, and medications
- Proof of vaccinations
Owner Preparation

- Documented medical history and/or needs
- Cat litter / Newspapers
- Chew toys or other comfort items
- Have collars, tags, leashes, harnesses, muzzles
Unprepared Pet Owners

Owners arriving without necessary supplies

- May not have been aware of requirements
- May not financially be able to comply
- May choose not to comply
- Disaster developed quickly & they did not have time to develop supplies
- Pet shelter plan should provide for stockpiling basic pet supplies
Problems with Pet Owners

Plan for owners not complying with rules:

- Not providing food and water for animal
- Not keeping it confined or under their control at all times
- Not cleaning the caging, litter box, or doing general cleanup of area
- Not providing dogs with opportunity to relieve themselves at designated sites
- Verbal or physical abuse of animal
Violation of Rules

If a pet owner violates shelter rules:

- The animal should be removed to another part of the facility or to a temporary animal shelter
- All care should be provided by staff and volunteers
- The owner is denied access to their animal, or moved to a human only evacuation shelter, if possible
Pet Friendly Shelter Supplies

- Crates & cages – all sizes
- Food – different types
- Water – drink & clean
- Bowls
- Collars, leashes, muzzles
- Cat litter / newspapers
- Plastic sheets
- Paper towels
- 1st Aid Kits – human / pet
- Office supplies/Paperwork
- Identification tags
- Transport carts
- Waste disposal bags
- Blankets, towels, sheets
- Communication devices
- Cleaners/Disinfectants
Donation Management

- Control intake of supplies or it will control you
- All donation requests approved by donation manager
- Locate off-site storage facilities for large shipments
Designated Areas of Pet Shelter

- Animal intake / registration
- Animal housing – separated by species
- Isolation – sick, injured, stressed, aggressive
- Veterinary / first aid
- Food preparation
- Food storage – species & type
- Equipment storage – extra leashes, bowls, crates
Designated Areas of Pet Shelter

- Dog relief – tile or hard surface floor, preferably w/ drain
- Animal visitation – quiet area, possibly separate room where animals can be removed from cages
- Animal exercise – larger area where animals can be walked more extensively (indoors – hallway; outdoors if weather permits)
Shelter Procedures

Animal Intake

- Forms filled out on owners
- Identification photo taken of pet(s) – kept with paperwork
- ID attached to animal & cage
- Owner is given identification number of animal(s)
- Animal removed to proper area
Ongoing Procedures

- Limit number of owners in pet area at one time
- Schedule visits - feeding, cleaning, exercise & relief
- Log when owner provides care
- Limit interaction with animals not their own
- No visitors other than pet owners
- Animal care staff monitors condition of pets – vet staff should be notified of any medical problems
Other Options

Temporary Day Care Facilities

- Owners may be returning to the disaster area to retrieve belongings, make repairs, or processing applications for relief assistance
- Pet owner may be staying in the human evacuation shelter or other housing arrangements where it is not safe to leave the animal unattended
Foster Pet Care Programs

- Animal is cared for in a private home / stable in the community on a temporary basis
- Needed when pet shelter is closing, but animals still in its care.
- Should be last resort and used with caution
- Foster homes should be thoroughly screened to ensure safety of pet & foster family
- Foster pets & families should be matched similarly to regular pet adoptions
Closing down!

- Pets removed in organized fashion and logged out
- Unclaimed animals put in foster care, vets or shelter
- Non-perishable supplies cleaned and stored
- Perishable supplies distributed or disposed of
- Facility cleaned
- Paperwork kept for future reference
Final Thoughts
The HSUS Can Help You!
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