

Planning Improves Mitigation

Examples of planning efforts for animals include identifying the need for stronger legislation, establishing a legislative action group and creating a stronger commitment to make resources available for the care of animals by assigning roles and responsibilities of responders and by delegating authority. Other local planning efforts that support mitigation measures are those that affect resource allocations including commitments of human shelter managers to allow the co-location of people and animals during disasters.

For shelters to operate effectively, planning efforts can identify appropriate policies for management of animals, including under what conditions shelters will become available, where animals will be housed, who carries what liabilities, staffing levels and training of appropriate animal care personnel, such as animal control officers, animal technicians, veterinarians and volunteers and what responsibilities managers have, as well as any waivers that owners may be required to sign.

Best practices for animal shelter policy/guidelines have been published by the National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP).

It is also recommended that policies be put in place for animal owners wanting to care for animals be limited to general care of their own animals, and for shelters to establish procedures, such as a requirement for a family member remain in the shelter as long as the animal is housed there or for the owner to agree to a release of ownership for the animal in case they leave the shelter without the animal and do not return.