

Planning Improves Preparedness

Planning can result in better preparedness by identifying the need for training and exercises that build response capability and by developing a business plan on how to fund, conduct and evaluate the impact of training, exercises and real world events. Particular emphasis during planning should be placed on identifying special needs groups with animals, including the elderly who may need additional resources to evacuate with their pets, service animals that may have owners with special needs, and the ubiquitous owner with too many pets to care for on their own. Specialized response animals, such as Canine Urban Search and Rescue dogs may need to have designated locations identified in advance for recuperation between shifts during the response. Along these lines, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) published the “Standard for Mass Evacuation and Sheltering” which includes an annex on “Service Animals and Pets”. This standard is now the mainstream practice for emergency management and fire departments across the U.S. to plan for the care of animals in disasters in the U.S.