

Who Should be on the Planning Team?

Although formal plans involve organizations and groups that will be accountable for all phases of emergency management, the planning process is invariably the result of individual persons' interest in the subject, level of motivation, and hard work. Many examples exist of individuals who have inspired the development of state and local plans. Often these persons represent a group or agency that has a vested interest in the development of the plan and the welfare of the community. Examples include veterinarians at veterinary schools and in practice, public service, or retirement; animal control personnel; humane personnel working at local shelters or in administrative positions; veterinary technicians; and emergency managers, including those in police and fire departments. The initiative for plan development may come from either emergency management officials or the animal care community.

What Is Needed?

Some communities may not have an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) that addresses animal-related issues in disasters. Therefore persons interested in developing such a local EOP should first determine if their local government has an EOP at all. If it does, they should determine to what extent the care of animals and their owners is addressed. To create or improve a plan a commitment is needed at the outset. Persons who can provide that commitment are the director of the EMA (or in rare cases the governor or county commissioners) and the state veterinarian or state public health veterinarian (state EOP) or director of animal care and control (local EOP). Only once these persons have made a commitment should the development of a formal EOP proceed.

If for some reason an official should not want to establish a community plan that addresses the care of animals and their owners, it is important to document this position in writing. After all it is not a matter of whether a disaster will involve animals, but when. The persons who are responsible for setting up a community plan must also take responsibility for its deficiencies.



In times of devastation, such as that caused by Hurricane Andrew, if people do not have personal disaster preparedness plans, they are unlikely to be able to help others. (Photo by Rocky Bigbie.)

Planning Team

Just like responding to a disaster, developing a plan is a team effort. The first step is to form a committee of individuals who can contribute. The committee should be co-chaired by emergency management personnel and a representative from the animal care community. Veterinarians, county extension agents, and directors of humane shelters or animal control are examples of suitable animal care industry representatives. Members of this committee should ideally possess the following credentials:

- Authority to represent
- Control over resources that can be used in a disaster
- Experience or knowledge of disasters.

True representation of groups by appropriate individuals is critical. This must be determined either by formal recognition by the groups being represented or by appointment to the position. If formal representation is not ensured, the contribution and the availability of promised resources from a group must be questioned. Participation of animal control officials is essential in all plans intended to deal with stray animals in disasters.

Table 20-5 Possible local resources for help in disaster planning and response

4H groups	Livestock producer organizations
Agriculture departments	National Guard
Animal care and control	Neighborhood emergency groups
Aquariums	Pet suppliers
Army Veterinary Corps	Professional animal trainers
Breed organizations	Race tracks
Breeders	Red Cross
Department of Natural Resources	Renderers
Environmental groups	Research facilities
Fish and Game	Salvation Army
Future Farmers of America (FFA)/youth	Schools, educational institutions
Game wardens' groups	Cooperative Extension (county) agents
Health departments	Search and rescue teams
Helping dogs/training facilities	Specialty (oil spills) groups
Horse assistance and evacuation teams	Theme parks
Hotel/motel associations	Veterinarians
Humane organizations	Veterinary organizations
Livestock haulers	Wildlife agencies
	Wildlife rehabilitators
	Zoo personnel