



# JEFFERSON COUNTY, WASHINGTON ANIMAL DISASTER PROTECTION PLAN (ESF 25 equivalent – Animal Response Plan) Revised November 7, 2007

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## OBJECTIVE

Pets and livestock can become victims of disaster. Pets can be injured or become separated from their owners, and livestock can be displaced or threatened by emergency conditions. Recent experiences demonstrate that disaster animal welfare plans are an essential component in overall community emergency response and recovery planning.

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document articulates how animal welfare will be coordinated, and is the basis for development of supporting plans and procedures consistent with state and national standards for dealing with animals in a disaster.

This procedure establishes a working structure for animal rescue, evacuation, shelter, veterinary services, and mortality management during disasters that occur in Jefferson County. The plan is intended to assist neighborhoods and volunteer organizations in addressing needs of pets, livestock, poultry, horses and captive wildlife during disasters.

## AUTHORITY AND REFERENCE

- A. *Jefferson County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*, May 2005.
- B. *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 11, Appendix A, Tab B – Washington Animal Response Management Plan, March 2006.
- C. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Disaster Assistance Policy DAP9523.19, *Eligible Costs Related to Pet Evacuations and Sheltering*, dated October 24, 2007.<sup>i</sup>
- D. Relevant definitions:

**Congregate household pet shelter** – Any private or public facility that provides refuge of rescued household pets and the household pets of shelterees in response to a declared major disaster or emergency under federal regulations.<sup>ii</sup>

**DAWG** – Jefferson County **Disaster Animal Welfare Group** – an informal alliance of volunteers and professionals with an interest in the welfare and protection of animals in an emergency or disaster. The primary animal welfare coordinating group.

**Household pet** – any cat, dog, or other domesticated animal normally maintained in or near the domicile of the owner or caregiver of the animal. For the purpose of this plan, household pets do not include reptiles (except turtles), amphibians, fish, insects/arachnids, farm animals, and animals kept for racing purposes.

**Service animal** – any animal that assists or performs tasks for a person with a sensory, emotional, mental or physical disability.

**WARM** - Washington Animal Response Management; established to coordinate the response of state agencies in assisting local and volunteer organizations to provide all animals affected by natural or technological disasters with emergency medical care; evacuation; rescue; temporary confinement, shelter, food and water; and identification for return to the owner.

## **DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE**

A. These special procedures for dealing with animals are activated by the Department of Emergency Management upon occurrence of an emergency or disaster as defined in Chapter 38.52, Revised Code of Washington.

B. The primary animal disaster response organization is the Jefferson County Disaster Animal Welfare Group (DAWG). DAWG will be activated by the Department of Emergency Management. DAWG activities are coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Where possible, DAWG members will be registered in advance as Emergency Workers under WAC 118-04.

C. Animal welfare response will provide for joint owner-pet rescue/evacuation whenever possible without endangering human life.

D. Maximum attempt should be made to identify and establish animal evacuation shelters in close proximity to human sheltering facilities. Adjacent sheltering is the desired method.

E. Household pets in cages or carriers, or are under close control will be allowed to use public transit<sup>iii</sup> for movement to shelter facilities.

F. Those facilities that normally house multiple animals (animal hospitals, boarding kennels, etc.) are encouraged to create evacuation plans for such animals consistent with this procedure.

G. Coordination of animal disaster operations will be conducted according to the standards and practices of the National Incident Management System – Incident Command System.

## **ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. The Department of Emergency Management activates and coordinates animal disaster welfare operations through the Emergency Operations Center. JCDEM responsibilities include:

(1) Overall coordination of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in accordance with the law and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

(2) Provide overall coordination of emergency/disaster animal welfare response activities.

(3) Activate the provisions of this plan.

(4) Provide assistance where possible through the resource management capabilities of the Emergency Operations Center.

B. The Disaster Animal Welfare Group is the recognized alliance of volunteers responsible for executing this animal emergency plan. DAWG responsibilities include:

(1) Develop and maintain lists of resources, including trained volunteers and animal professionals able to provide assistance in a disaster.

(2) Coordinate training for neighborhood animal coordinators, animal professionals, first responders and other volunteers interested in animal disaster welfare.

(3) Develop and release public information prior to the emergency or disaster on disaster planning and safety for animals.

(4) Notify and mobilize all volunteers and neighborhood animal groups in time of emergency.

(5) Assist with identification of suitable facilities for animal shelters and other resources.

(6) Be prepared to make reports to the Emergency Operations Center on animal emergency response activities.

(7) Participate, through the appropriate EOC representative, in development of animal rescue and shelter provisions in the Incident Action Plans prepared for each operational period.

(8) Assist with the annual review and revision of plans and procedures for dealing with animals in an emergency or disaster.

(9) Prepare after action reports for the Department of Emergency Management.

C. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Animal Control will carry out its statutory responsibilities in coordination with DAWG to the extent possible.

D. Washington Animal Response Management (WARM) assistance may be requested in the event local resources are overwhelmed.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

A. Neighborhood preparedness groups will work cooperatively with DAWG to develop animal emergency response plans.

B. DAWG will maintain a database of local resources to be used for animal disaster response. Resources will include neighborhood animal coordinator contact information, trained and professionally qualified volunteers, available supplies, equipment, facilities and transportation.

C. Animal disaster response volunteers will participate in training and disaster exercises as a part of disaster readiness.

D. DAWG will coordinate with the Olympic Peninsula Chapter, American Red Cross in the development of co-location (adjacent facilities) of human/household pet shelters to the extent possible.

E. The Department of Emergency Management will activate the provisions of this plan. Activate means notification of the DAWG personnel, implementation of domestic animal

evacuation and shelter operations, and conducting other animal rescue activities as Emergency Workers as defined in WAC 118-04.

F. A designated DAWG representative will coordinate with the EOC Public Information Officer (or Joint Information Center) to ensure dissemination of information on the location and availability of animal shelters and animal care resources. The joint public information process will be used for reunification of animals with their owners.

G. The Jefferson County Department of Health will assist with identification, prevention and control of animal diseases that may impact public and animal health.

H. Neighborhood preparedness groups may be requested to assist with allocation of supplies and resources to disaster affected areas.

I. DAWG, in cooperation with Animal Control, will coordinate with the EOC for removal and disposal of animal carcasses consistent with the requirements of the Jefferson County Department of Health.

#### **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION**

A. According to updated FEMA policy, a domesticated animals (not kept for commercial purposes) can travel in commercial carriers, and be housed in temporary facilities. Local animal policy provides that wherever possible household pets will be housed adjacent to established public shelters.

B. Local governments that conduct animal shelter operations or receive evacuees from areas *declared a major disaster or an emergency*<sup>iv</sup> may seek reimbursement for eligible pet rescue, sheltering and evacuation-support costs. This only applies to household pets and service animals. Contractors and private nonprofit organizations can be reimbursed through Jefferson County provided that the contractor or PNP is performing operations on behalf of Jefferson County Emergency Management according to this plan, and all eligible expenses are documented. (Reference FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy DAP9523.19 - October 24, 2007).

C. It is foreseeable that some emergency operations may take priority over the rescue of animals under this plan. Although every effort will be made to include animals in all emergency response strategy, circumstances may prevent the full implementation of that strategy.

D. Ineligibility of horses and farm animals for FEMA reimbursement in a major disaster will not impact the purpose of this plan to carry out the rescue and evacuation of such animals to the extent possible with the resources available.

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<sup>i</sup> Always refer to the most current version before assuming eligibility for possible reimbursement. FEMA policies change frequently.

<sup>ii</sup> Household pets are defined separately from horses or farm animals because of eligibility for the reimbursement of eligible costs in the event of a federally declared emergency.

<sup>iii</sup> According to current Jefferson Transit policy.

<sup>iv</sup> Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Assistance Act, as amended.