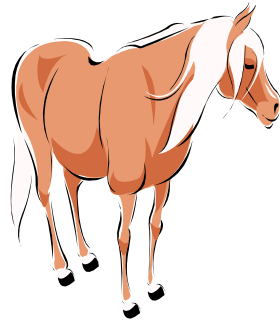


Pet Friendly Shelter Manual



Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team

Tallahassee

Florida

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I. Introduction

Emergency Pet Sheltering, also referred to as a Pet Friendly Shelter, is designed to meet the needs of people and their animals during emergencies and disasters. Animal owners are responsible for their pets, and should have a disaster plan prepared for their animals in case of evacuations or emergencies. Still, there will sometimes be situations where emergency animal sheltering is needed, such as the rapid-onset disasters, massive evacuations where hotels / motels, Veterinarian Clinics and kennels are full, and evacuees who bring their pets with them.

Purpose

To provide temporary shelter for pets and livestock during emergencies or disasters, including safe housing, food and water.

Locating Pet Friendly Animal Shelters

Pet Friendly Shelter locations will be those designated by the Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC) as meeting the American Red Cross Hurricane Shelter Selection Criteria (ARC # 4496) for humans and / or animals.

When the Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) is operating under the auspices of the ARC, the ARC has sole discretion for determining the need for a Pet Friendly Shelter as well as designating an ARC shelter location to be used during an event.

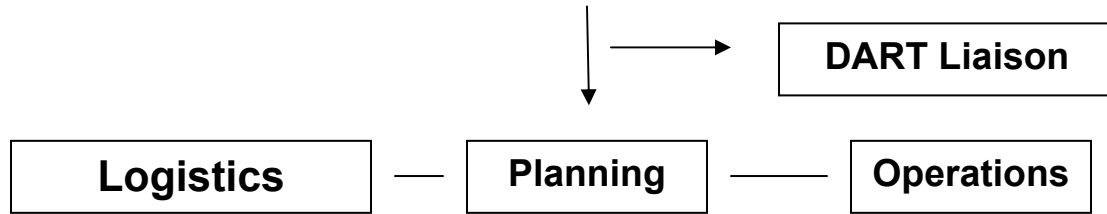
Allowable Animals

- (1) Companion animals. Licensed companion animals such as seeing eye dogs are generally allowed to stay in American Red Cross shelters with their owner.
- (2) Domestic pets. Includes dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, small mammals (gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits, potbelly pigs), reptiles, fish, and arachnids.
- (3) Livestock. Large animals such as horses, mules, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas and emus will be housed in separate locations identified and pre-arranged by DART.
- (4) Animals not allowed include wild animals, exotics, feral animals, poisonous reptiles, and endangered or threatened species.

II. Organizational Charts and Responsibilities

Organizational Chart for Command

Pet Shelter Supervisor



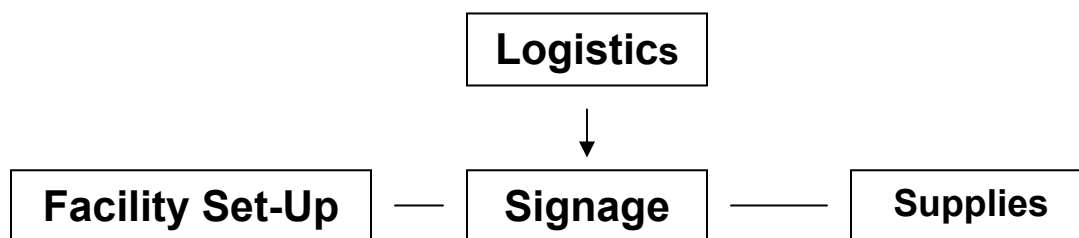
Command Responsibilities

- Responsible for overall management of the Pet Friendly Shelter
- Initiate set-up of Pet Friendly Shelter operations
- Supervision of DART members and volunteers
- Coordination with ARC Shelter Manager and DART Liaison
- Maintaining incident log
- Close out of Pet Friendly Shelter operations
- Submission of Pet Friendly Shelter report to Incident Commander

DART Liaison Responsibilities

- Coordinate with the ARC
- Notify DART membership and volunteers of activation
- Contact DART membership and volunteers and schedule staff
- Coordinate with other agencies (humane societies, rescue groups, animal control, veterinarians, boarders, kennels, groomers etc...)
- Point of Contact for the public
- Maintain log of contacts
- Coordinate procurement / delivery of supplies
- Contact the on-call veterinarian when needed

Organizational Chart for Logistics

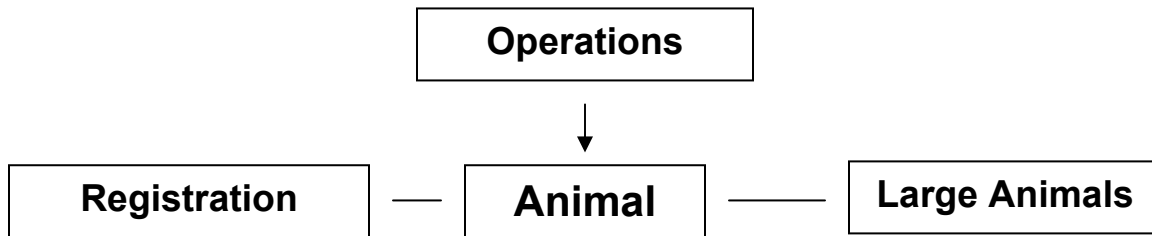


Logistics Responsibilities

- Set up signage and registration area at designated Pet Friendly Shelter
- Inventory facility space and note present conditions
- Configure pet shelter space (dogs, cats, isolation wards, materials)
- Set up trash cans, fans, plastic sheeting, crates and supplies

- Ensure adequate supplies of crates, food, plastic bags, disinfectant, etc.
- Coordinate with DART Liaison for special supply needs
- Coordinate with ARC Shelter Manager for location of trash disposal, pet walking areas, and needs of DART members and volunteers
- Break down of Pet Friendly Shelter, clean-up of area, and final check of area

Organizational Chart for Operations



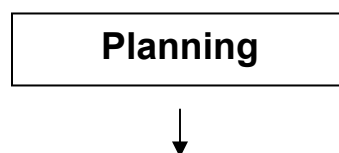
Operations Responsibilities

- Register evacuees and their animals using appropriate forms
- Take photo of animal with their owner(s)
- Perform animal intake and health assessment
- Assign animal to crate and properly label crate with owner identification
- Maintain file of all animals currently in the Pet Friendly Shelter
- Assist owners when they come to walk / feed / care for their pet
- Notify Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor when owners are not caring for pets on a regular schedule
- Coordinate with the on-site veterinarian to deal with pet health care issues
- Walk / feed pets whose owners are housed in another ARC shelter
- Monitor animals for stress / behavior problems
- Monitor supplies, food and environmental conditions
- Assist in break-down and cleaning of Pet Friendly Shelter and crates

Large Animals

- Direct owners to location of farms / stables for livestock
- Coordinate with logistics to provide livestock feed if needed
- Ensure owners of large animals / livestock are registered at an ARC shelter and have completed DART registration and intake forms
- Notify Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor of any problems

Organizational Chart for Planning





Planning Responsibilities

- Work with operations and logistics to keep abreast of staffing needs for upcoming shifts
- Communicate situation reports to DART Liaison and Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor to plan for next operational period
- Keep abreast of incident situation and changing conditions
- Coordinate with Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor and DART Liaison to plan for the number of DART members and volunteers needed according to the number of pets in the Pet Friendly Shelter
- Assist with operations of Pet Friendly Shelter as needed

III. Set-Up Procedures

Authority for opening the Pet Friendly Shelter rests with the ARC. That decision will be communicated directly to the DART Liaison or the Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor.

1. Facility Requirements

Prior to using a facility as a Pet Friendly Shelter, a DART member will physically inspect the site and do an inventory of the current condition of the facility, making note of any damage, equipment, furniture or materials present as well as cleanliness of the site. For use as a Pet Friendly Shelter, the following requirements must be present:

- Operational water and power
- Adequate lighting
- Ingress and egress through all doors, including emergency exits
- Facility security
- Functional restrooms
- Non-carpeted floors

2. Registration and Intake Area

The registration area should be located near a strategic entry point easily reached from the “people” shelter but should not be a narrow, cramped space. Entry point should be clearly signed and, if possible, directional signs to the Pet Friendly Shelter posted along the way. If there are language difficulties with the owner, request an interpreter from the ARC Shelter Manager.

- Provide a table for owner registration and immediately take a photo of the animal with its owner and attach it to the registration form.

- Pet owners must be officially registered at a ARC shelter in order to have their pet in the Pet Friendly Shelter. If the ARC shelter located with the Pet Friendly Shelter is completely filled up, evacuees who are registered at other ARC shelters may register their pet at the Pet Friendly Shelter and DART members and volunteers will care for it.
- Designate a space for DART members to fill out the animal intake forms and do a health assessment on the animal.
- Assign the animal to an appropriately sized crate or kennel and ensure water, towels or bedding is provided. Immediately label the crate with the owner's name and the pet's name and any special needs.
- If the owner brings their own crate, make sure it is clearly labeled with their name, note that on the intake form, and place the crate in the appropriate area.
- Keep all leashes, collars, food bowls, toys or bedding that the owner provides with the animal, either inside the crate or directly on top of it.

3. Volunteer Coordination

Provide a separate table or area away from the Animal Intake area for DART volunteer registration. This area should be available for DART members and volunteers to store personal gear such as coats, bags, DART kits, etc. and should have chairs to take rest breaks, eat snacks away from animal areas, and set up cots for night shifts.

- DART members and volunteers should have an ARC photo identification badge.
- DART members and volunteers will fill out a registration form.
- DART members and volunteers will wear a DART t-shirt or vest.
- DART members and volunteers will check in / check out with Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor.
- DART members and volunteers will have access to snacks, food and water provided by the ARC.

IV. Operations

Signage

- Clearly mark all doors to the area as a "Pet Friendly Shelter".
- Clearly mark one (1) door for "Animal Intake."
- Post DART policies and procedures for pet care and feeding.
- Designate and clearly post a "dog walk" area (flagging is best for this)

Animal Areas

- Triage area: Should be near the Registration desk where the Animal Intake form and assessment are completed; animals are identified, photographed, examined, and assigned to the appropriate area.

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- No animal will be outside its crate / kennel without a leash and identification tag. Only designated DART members, volunteers or animal owners will be allowed to remove any animal from its crate / kennel.
- Species should be separated (dogs / cats / birds) as well as those animals with special needs, are sick or under stress, or are aggressive.

DOGS

- If space permits, crates or kennels should be twelve (12) inches or more apart.
- Crates should be oriented to keep animals facing away from each other.
- Provide food and water bowls, identification tag, leash, and bedding for each crate.
- For dogs sensitive to noise, activity or other dogs, provide a sheet to keep the sides of the crate covered.
- The dog area should be close to an exit door to facilitate reaching dog walk areas; provide all owners with plastic bags for clean-up each time they walk their dog.
- If necessary because of weather or dangerous conditions, a dog walk area can be created indoors in a separate room. Assign a DART member or volunteer specifically for maintaining this area.
- Provide separate areas for dogs that are sick and for those without proof of vaccination.
- Dogs that are seriously ill or pose a health risk to others should be transported to a local veterinarian. Contact the on-call DART veterinarian for assistance.
- Aggressive animals must be securely contained. The owner will be responsible for care and feeding of an aggressive animal. If the owner does not have a muzzle, provide one for the duration of the stay in the Pet Friendly Shelter.
- DART may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive.
- Isolate dogs that are in heat.

CATS

- Cats should be kept in a separate area from dogs, in the quietest part of the area away from doors and other activity.
- Cats that are sick or without proof of vaccination should be kept separate.
- Provide food and water bowls, identification tag, and bedding for each crate.
- Provide kitty litter boxes in an area where owners can take their cats out of the crates for exercise and / or feeding, or provide a litter box inside the crate. Litter boxes should be cleaned (scooped) regularly.
- Isolate cats that are in heat.

BIRDS

- Designate an area for birds away from drafts and temperature extremes.
- All birds must be in cages, fully ventilated. Provide food, water, identification tag, and newspaper for all cages.

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- Contact a DART member with bird expertise or a member of the Tri-State Avian Society to assess the bird and the bird area location.
- Cages may accommodate up to three (3) birds if the birds are socialized, free of disease, and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide a sheet to cover the birdcage to deter noise, and cover at night.

FERRETS

- Ferrets must be current in rabies vaccinations.
- Cages may house up to three (3) ferrets if they are socialized, free of disease, and ample mobility is allowed for each.
- Provide food, water, identification tag, and bedding for each cage.
- Cages must be of sturdy construction, chew-proof, and deep enough to allow for appropriate bedding.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

SMALL MAMMALS

- All small mammals are to be kept caged at all times.
- Provide food, water, identification tag, and bedding for each cage.
- Cages must provide ample mobility and be well ventilated.
- Cages or containers must be chew-proof.
- Provide odor-inhibiting bedding material such as wood chips or shredded paper.
- Change bedding regularly and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag.

REPTILES

- Reptiles should be kept in a separate area from other animals.
- Locate reptile area near electrical outlets for portable heaters.
- Reptile cages should be cleaned daily to prevent risk of salmonella.
- Provide each cage with food, water, identification tag, and bedding if required.

ARACHNIDS

- If possible, locate arachnids away from other animals.
- Provide water and identification tag for each cage. Owner will be responsible for feeding and providing any bedding or natural materials (twigs, grass) required.

LARGE ANIMALS

- Horses will be separated according to proof of negative Coggins test, and stallions housed separately from mares and geldings.
- Owners are responsible for transporting large animals. DART will assist owners by directing or leading the owner to nearby farms or stable identified for housing livestock. Owners must be officially registered as staying at the ARC shelter.

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- Farms, stables, or corrals used to house evacuated animals should be out of the immediate disaster area.
- Only DART members that are familiar and experienced in large animal handling will be assigned to these tasks. Animal Intake forms, photographs, and assessments should be conducted before the animal is boarded.
- If weather conditions permit, owners should travel to the farm or location to feed and care for large animals. If not, arrangements will be made for DART or farm owner to feed and care for the animal.

Operations: Policies and procedures governing operation of the Pet Friendly Shelter

- Dart members functioning as DART Liaison, Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor or Operations Manager must have completed DART training.
- DART members and volunteers must be at least 18 years old.
- DART members and volunteers will wear identification identifying themselves as such.
- The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor is in charge of the operation of the Pet Friendly Shelter and has the authority to set specific rules, approve variances to DART policies, dismiss volunteers, determine staffing levels, and refuse to accept animals.
- Only pet owners and DART members and volunteers may remove animals from crates.
- Unless needs dictate, owners are responsible for administering all medications to pets.
- Pets in the Pet Friendly Shelter will not have contact with other pets.
- Owners will be asked to provide proof of vaccinations such as shot records or rabies tag; this will be noted on the registration and intake forms. During disaster or evacuations, it is recognized that pet owners may not always remember to bring proof of rabies vaccination or bordetella shots. The registration forms will indicate that the pet owner accepts the risks of boarding their pet in the Pet Friendly Shelter.
- Only DART members and volunteers or pet owners and building maintenance workers are allowed inside the Pet Friendly Shelter.
- The Pet Friendly Shelter will be locked at night.
- At least two (2) DART members or volunteers will be present at all times. When animals are in residence, the facility will never be left unattended.
- The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor will devise and post an emergency evacuation plan for the Pet Friendly Shelter in case of fire, severe weather, or power failure.
- Pet owners will feed, walk, and care for their animals. The exception will be those animals whose owners are staying at other ARC shelters and cannot travel to visit their animals.
- Animals will be fed once a day and walked at least twice a day. Pet owners who do not adhere to the minimum care schedule will be notified through the Shelter Manager that they must care for their animal or they will be asked to remove their animal from the Pet Friendly Shelter. Pet owners who do not perform the minimum care for their animals or allow them to run free in the area will be reported to Animal

Control and may result in being asked to remove their animals from the Pet Friendly Shelter.

- Each crate or kennel will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by another animal. All food and water bowls must be cleaned and disinfected and new bedding provided for the next animal.
- The DART members will perform regular “poop patrol” walks to ensure animal owners have cleaned up the Dog Walk area.
- The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor will immediately inform the Shelter Manager of any problems with the building, security, shelter population, or hazardous situation.
- The facility will be left as clean or cleaner than before the Pet Friendly Shelter was set up.
- Spontaneous volunteers will not be allowed to work in the Pet Friendly Shelter.

V. Breakdown Procedures

Authority for closing the Pet Friendly Shelter rests with the ARC in consultation with various animal support organizations. That decision will be communicated directly to the DART Liaison or the Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor. Once the decision has been made to close the Pet Friendly Shelter, break down can be initiated and may, if necessary, be phased in over time if some animals are still in residence. The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor may request the DART Liaison to call in extra volunteers to assist in breakdown if needed. In lieu of this, other ARC volunteers may be used if they are available.

- Once owners have checked out all the animals housed in the Pet Friendly Shelter, all crates, kennels and cages will be broke down and removed from the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting of crates and kennels after breakdown can occur off-site.
- All crates, materials and supplies will be removed from the facility and plastic sheeting will be taken up.

Clean Up

- All floors will be cleaned and disinfected. Any furniture, tables or shelves used for holding crates and animals will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes. Handrails, water fountains and doorknobs will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.
- Trash receptacles will be emptied and bagged trash placed in designated dumpsters.
- Facility restrooms will be cleaned and the trash emptied.
- The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor will have the Shelter Manager physically inspect the building before leaving and correct any discrepancies noted.
- Cages, crates and kennels will be cleaned and disinfected before being returned to their appropriate storage locations.
- All towels, sheets and bedding will be laundered with detergent and bleach after being used for each animal. All towels, sheets and bedding will be laundered before storing in watertight containers.

Inventory

- All DART and ARC materials, including forms, supplies, safety equipment and DART t-shirts and vests will be inventoried and returned to the appropriate organization.
- Food will be stored in watertight containers.

VI. Incident Close Out

Report Writing

The Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor will submit a written report to the ARC. This report will be based on the incident log kept at the Pet Friendly Shelter and the log kept by the DART Liaison in the ARC EOC. It will include the number and types of animals housed, an assessment of DART operations and staffing, descriptions of problems or “incidents within the incident” and how they were handled, and identify any gaps in skills, staffing or logistics. The report will include a section on lessons learned during the incident.

Documentation

Documentation of the incident will include all registration and animal intake forms, photographs of pets and owners, volunteer registration forms, incident logs kept by the Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor and the DART Liaison, receipts for purchases and thank you letters. This documentation will form the basis of the DART report submitted to the ARC but remain the property of DART. Any information included on these forms will be considered confidential.

Close-Out Meeting

The DART Liaison and the Pet Friendly Shelter Supervisor will attend the ARC EOC close out meeting to help assess management of the incident and identify problems. One of them will give a verbal report of the Pet Friendly Shelter operations during close out.

Typically, the DART team will not conduct its own close-out meeting but will review the incident in the next regularly scheduled DART meeting and discuss problems and skill gaps in DART operations.

Thank You Letters

The DART team will write thank you letters to people, agencies or companies who assisted DART during the disaster. The thank you letters will be signed by an officer or board member of DART. These letters should be written within a week of the ARC EOC close out meeting and will form part of the documentation of the incident.

VII. Long Term Sheltering

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In some disasters, there is the possibility that the response and recovery operations may stretch into weeks or months. Most DART members, being volunteers, are not prepared or able to continue operating a Pet Friendly Shelter for large numbers of animals of evacuated people who have been left homeless by a disaster.

Currently, DART members and animal shelters focus on three possibilities:

1. Boarding animals at veterinarian clinics and / or private kennels. This is especially necessary in the case of known aggressive animals that can't be fostered. Post-disaster, as private kennels and veterinarian clinics begin to open back up for business, arrangements can be made for long-term boarding.
2. Fostering in the local community. DART members and animal organizations have been working to develop extensive lists of people willing to foster animals. These are typically people who are members of their local humane society; for example, the Leon County Humane Society has a list of 150 foster families. Humane societies and county animal shelter volunteers form the backbone of this effort. Fostering of animals for people made homeless by a disaster is designed as a long term but still temporary measure – the rightful owners will take the pet back as soon as they are in housing where they can keep their pet. Fostering programs need to be designed with care, with possible fosters approved ahead of time. Similar programs are used nationwide for fostering the pets of battered women who seek refuge in a battered women's shelter but are not permitted to have pets with them in the shelter.
3. Moving animals from the Pet Friendly Shelter to an animal shelter in another city or county who have space for the animals. This effort has included shipping adoptable shelter animals from a local shelter to locations nation wide in order to reduce the population at the animal shelter and could possibly make room for boarding the pets of disaster-affected people until they can once again take their pet back.