

The PETS Act



The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act is one of several changes made to the Robert T. Stafford Transportation Act in October 2006. It states that in order for states and communities to receive federal funding for disaster relief, they must account for household pets in the preparedness plan. As most disaster responses rely heavily on national funding, this act compels significant changes in many local response efforts.

Unfortunately, the PETS Act itself offers no guidance on zoonotic or infectious disease prevention, animal behavior considerations, or safety precautions to consider when planning for the shelter and care of large groups of pets.

The unique knowledge base and training possessed by veterinarians allows them to make invaluable contributions toward the design and implementation of animal disaster plans. From llamas to lizards and everything in between, veterinarians are exceptionally qualified to guide the care of these pets in times of disaster.

We are urging veterinarians to embrace their responsibilities as public health specialists and to collaborate with local emergency managers in updating local plans to comply with the PETS Act. In many cases, veterinarians who have gotten involved are recognized by their town and community for their contributions and have reported a subsequent increase in business.

Do you know your town's plan?



Visit our website!

[http://www.tufts.edu/vet/
student/disaster/disasterweb.html](http://www.tufts.edu/vet/student/disaster/disasterweb.html)

We've got links for you and your clientele ranging from emergency kit lists, printable window stickers, and sample agreements with neighbors to information on specific hazards and disaster response groups.

Questions? Contact us:
tuftsvetdisastermed@gmail.com

Support generously provided by:

Tufts UNIVERSITY | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Citizenship
and Public Service



Veterinarians and Local Disasters: What **You** Can Do

Town: _____

Emergency Management Director*:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

* Listed at: www.state.ma.us/mema, then click
"Emergency Management Directors Listing"
under "Key Resources"

When disaster strikes,
are the animals in **YOUR**
community accounted for?



REGIONAL AND STATE RESPONSE:

Regional animal response teams may respond to any disaster affecting families and their pets, including floods, house and apartment fires, chemical hazards, extended power losses, severe storms and hurricanes.

These teams consist of local community members and are the first line of defense in the event of any disaster.

State teams are activated when the disaster overwhelms the local resources. These teams are often associated with larger scale incidents including foreign animal disease outbreaks, and generally have a larger resource base to draw upon.

Thinking even bigger? Consider joining the National Veterinary Response Team (formerly VMAT). This is a federal disaster response team that is activated only in declared states of emergency.

There are also several national nonprofit groups that respond to animals in disasters, including, but not limited to the HSUS, Noah's Wish, United Animal Nations EARS, and Code 3 Associates. These teams offer a variety of useful training opportunities and are often activated at the request of a state rather than the declaration of a national disaster so may be first line responders in large-scale disasters.

What if my clinic is in the disaster?

The AVMA has a free online guide for individual veterinary clinic preparedness. This can be found at <http://www.avma.org/disaster/>

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Ensure your clinic is disaster-ready and educate your clients on how they can prepare their WHOLE family for times of disaster.
- Volunteer with local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or regional-level animal disaster team as a veterinary resource
- Join the State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team (SMART) - www.smart-mass.org

Volunteering with a response group is never a definitive commitment to respond to any given disaster. You will be considered a potential resource that may be requested if needed, but you will not be required to abandon your home and clinic for multiple days unless you so choose.

- Assist in developing plans for accommodating animals in your town's disaster preparedness. FEMA courses online (IS10, IS11, Animals in Disasters) are free and a great tool.
- Volunteer your clinic as a shelter for animals in need in the event of a disaster by notifying your local or state response team of your clinic's availability and capacity.

HELPING YOUR CLIENTELE'S WHOLE FAMILY:

The ideal disaster response is to not have teams activated at all. If all animal owners have a successful family emergency plan, morbidity and mortality from a disaster will be decreased dramatically. You can assist your clientele with preparedness by:

- Encouraging microchipping and tattooing for permanent identification
- Providing copies of medical and vaccination records to your clients
- Informing your clients of resources that provide information on family preparedness and developing an emergency kit
- Encouraging clients to keep collars or harnesses with identification on all pets
- Encouraging your farm clients to establish a "sister" farm that can help transport and/or accommodate their livestock in a disaster
- Offer guidance on the most appropriate place on the farm to house the animals during a flood, barn fire, or blizzard
- Encourage milking farms to obtain and maintain a generator for emergencies

