

Wake County Animal Protection Plan

Procedure to address animal issues in the event of an emergency in Wake County



Developed by:

Wake County Division of Emergency Management

in cooperation with

***Wake County Department of Environmental Services
Animal Services Division***

Revised May 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Wake County Division of Emergency Management wishes to acknowledge the members of the ***PETS/Livestock Disaster Preparedness Planning Group*** for their full participation and coordinated efforts which have made this procedure viable. Membership of this multi-jurisdictional task force consisted of the following persons and agencies:

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose Statement:

- **Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006**

Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 - Amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to require the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness operational plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency.

Authorizes the Director to:

(1) study and develop plans that take into account the needs of individuals with pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency; and

(2) make financial contributions, on the basis of programs or projects approved by the Director, to the states and local authorities for animal emergency preparedness purposes, including the procurement, construction, leasing, or renovating of emergency shelter facilities and materials that will accommodate people with pets and service animals.

Authorizes federal agencies to provide, as assistance essential to meeting threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster, rescue, care, shelter, and essential needs to individuals with household pets and service animals and to such pets and animals.

- **Provide assistance as capable for large animal issues as it relates to public safety (such as unsecured livestock or horses on roadways)**

1.2 Scope:

This Plan is intended for use by local government to take immediate action in providing a means of care and control to minimize animal suffering in the event of an emergency.

Within Wake County, the Director of Emergency Management or his/her authorized representative(s) may place into effect established plans and procedures and direct both the emergency and recovery aspects of the incident. The Director of Emergency Management may deviate from these procedures when, in his/her judgment, immediate and direct action is necessary to protect the public safety.

2.0 Affected Agencies/Responsibilities

2.1 Primary Agencies:

A. Wake County Environmental Services – Animal Services Division:

1. As part of the Animal Protection Branch within the EOC:
 1. Assist with coordinating support agencies to manage animal protection in emergencies
 2. Assist with coordinating equipment and /or shelter as required to protect companion animals under the PETS Act.
 3. Assist with locating, within capabilities, resources for livestock and equine
 4. Assist with response for sick and/or injured non-domestic animals
 5. Respond to calls related to rabies vectors, bites and public health that are under the jurisdiction of Wake County Animal Control.
 6. Raleigh Animal Control, Garner Animal Control, Cary Animal Control and Holly Springs Animal Control will respond to the calls related to rabies vectors, bites and public health in their jurisdictions.

B. Wake County Division of Emergency Management:

Activate the Emergency Operations Center, if necessary. Emergency Operations Center is responsible for overall direction and control of the emergency incident.

2.2 Support Agencies:

A. Wake County Human Services

Assist in policy to ensure animal protection steps are consistent with public health priorities. Recommend related outreach materials and media releases and reviews for technical accuracy.

B. State Agriculture and Animal Response Team

The State Agriculture and Animal Response Team (SART) is an interagency partnership dedicated to preparing, planning, responding and recovering during animal emergencies in North Carolina. The team is organized and operates under the auspices of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) utilizing the principles of the Incident Command System. The team's mission is to coordinate requests for assistance related to ESF 11 submitted to the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center.

C. NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine

The team's mission is to coordinate requests for assistance related to ESF 11 submitted to the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center.

D. NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services:

NCDA&CS will be responsible for the enforcement of state regulations concerning animal health and welfare and the movement of animals affected by those regulations.

They assist and advise agencies on the PETS Act and other companion animal initiatives. The Department serves as a member of the State Emergency Response Team and State Agricultural and Animal Response Team as the coordinating agency for ESF 11 activities at the State level. Additionally, NCDA&CS provides information and training whenever possible with regard to the general health of domestic and non-domestic animals.

E. Wake County Cooperative Extension:

Aid in the protection of livestock and equine during an emergency situation.

2.3 Additional Resources:

A. Local Animal Welfare Organizations

Assist as requested through Wake County Emergency Operations Center or in coordination with ESF 11.

B. N. C. Wildlife Resource Commission:

This is the Wake County contact for assistance and guidance with the protection of native wildlife.

3.0 Planning Assumptions

- A. The owners of pets or livestock are expected to prepare in advance for emergencies and are expected to take reasonable steps to shelter and provide for animals under their care and/or control. Provisions include care, recovery and evacuation by owners of pets, livestock or equine.
- B. Natural, technological, or manmade disasters could affect the well-being of domesticated or non-domesticated animals.
- C. The County should plan for emergency situations and to carry out response and recovery operations utilizing local resources.
- D. Owners of all other domesticated animals, livestock and equine will be offered information and guidance about how to locate resources.
- E. Public information statements will be issued through the various media outlets.
- F. A large-scale emergency in Wake County may overwhelm local resources and response from State and Federal agencies, and other organizations may be necessary.

- G. Effective animal protection planning and organization leads to more effective disaster relief efforts.

4.0 Concept of Operations

4.1 General:

- A. The primary and support agencies identified in this Wake County Animal Protection Plan will manage and coordinate local animal protection activities under the direction of the Wake County Emergency Operation Center. These agencies will use established animal protection and support organizations, processes, procedures and the Incident Command System. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs in the event of a large-scale emergency lies primarily with the Wake County Division of Emergency Management through the Wake County Emergency Operation Center.
- B. The Wake County Emergency Operations Center will communicate resource needs to State and Federal agencies and partners.
- C. Animal protection operations will be managed under the Wake County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- D. Animals Included Under the Plan:
1. The sheltering and protection of pets, livestock and equine are the responsibility of their owners or their designated agent.
 2. Animals that are identified as lost, stray, abandoned by their owners or dangerous to the public will be the responsibility of the appropriate Animal Control Unit – either Raleigh, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs or Wake County. Animals in this section are defined as animals routinely cared for by Animal Control including domesticated cats, dogs, rabbits, pet rats, pet mice, hamsters, gerbils, ferrets, guinea pigs and chinchillas. These animals will be sheltered, fed, and, if possible, returned to their owners in accordance with established animal control procedures. Disposition of animals that cannot be returned to their owners, will be handled in accordance with established animal control procedures.
 3. Wild animals should be left to their survival instincts. Wild animals out of their natural habitats that are in danger either to themselves or the public will be the responsibility N. C. Wildlife Resource Commission personnel, in cooperation with local animal control officials.

4.2 Notification:

This plan and implementing procedures will be activated in the event of an emergency causing a significant need for animal protection. The Wake County Division of Emergency Management, through coordination of the Emergency Operations Center, will determine

when these procedures will be implemented and notify the appropriate primary, support, and mutual aid agencies.

4.3 Communications:

Communications between the primary and support agencies will occur primarily through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center.

4.4 Public Information (PI):

A spokesperson from Wake County Communications Office will be responsible for the coordination of all media activities and press releases associated with the protection of animals.

4.5 Response:

The owners or designated agents of pets, livestock or equines will take all reasonable steps to shelter and provide for animals under their control.

A. Search and Rescue

1. Domestic Pets:

Domestic pets that are unsecured or in need of shelter due to the emergency or to the death or evacuation of their owners, will be the responsibility of the appropriate Animal Control Unit, either Raleigh, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs or Wake County Animal Control. As resources diminish, the Wake County Emergency Operations Center will be notified.

2. Livestock:

Disposition of livestock that is unsecured or in need of assistance due to the emergency or to the death or evacuation of their owners will be coordinated through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center.

3. Wild Animals:

Wild animals that are endangering either themselves or the human population will be the responsibility of N. C. Wildlife Resource Commission personnel in cooperation with the appropriate Animal Control Unit, either Raleigh, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs or Wake County Animal Control.

B. Shelters

1. Evacuated Domestic Pets:

Evacuated pets will be accepted at pre-determined Wake County Evacuation Shelters. Owners of these pets will be responsible for care and feeding of their pets while at the shelter. Owners will be expected to provide all food and medication that their pets require. Housing for animals such as birds, reptiles, fish, rabbits, ferrets, chinchillas, rats, mice, gerbils, hamsters and guinea pigs will not be available at the Wake County Evacuation Shelters.

2. Animal Evacuation Shelter:

If the need arises, the county may request assistance through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center for additional resources in establishing pet shelters.

3. Stray/Lost Domestic Pets:

All stray/lost domestic pets recovered by Raleigh, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs or Wake County Animal Control will be sheltered at the Wake County Animal Center and disposition of these pets will be handled in accordance with established animal control procedures.

4. Evacuated and Stray/Lost Livestock:

Due to the size of most livestock and the inability to transport large numbers of farm animals, owners are expected to develop shelter and/or evacuation plans for their own animals. A request may be made to the Wake County Emergency Operations Center to coordinate additional resources.

5. Wild Animals:

Wake County does not shelter wild animals. Any issues regarding wildlife will be addressed through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center.

4.6 Recovery:

A. Release/Destruction

1. Domestic Pets:

Wake County Animal Center will support efforts to identify owners of stray/lost animals. If owners cannot be found, disposition of the animals will be in accordance with established animal control procedures.

2. Livestock:

Requests for assistance in recovering livestock will be made through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center.

B. Disposal of Animal Carcasses

Disposal of deceased animals will be coordinated through the Wake County Emergency Operations Center.

5.0 Review and Update

This procedure will be periodically reviewed and updated as appropriate by the Wake County Division of Emergency Management in cooperation with the Wake County Department of Environmental Services – Animal Services Division.

Effective Date: March 1, 1998

Revision #1: May 2001

Revision #2: May 2014

Revision #3: May 2016

6.0 Approval

6.1 Primary Agencies:

Wake County Department of Environmental Services

Wake County Division of Emergency Management

Annex A

Wake County Disaster Planning Tips For Pets, Livestock, and Wildlife

Domestic Pets

- If you evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND**. Pets most likely cannot survive on their own, and if by chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.
- Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if the animal panics, it cannot escape.
- Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they are not available later.
- Make sure you have a copy of your pet's medical records. If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Most boarding kennels and veterinarians, require that your pet's vaccinations are current.
- If it is impossible to take your pet with you to a temporary shelter, contact friends, family, veterinarians, or boarding kennels to arrange for care. Make sure medical and feeding information, food, medicine and other supplies accompany your pet to its foster home.

Livestock

- Evacuate livestock whenever possible. The evacuation sites should have or be able to readily obtain food, water, veterinary care, handling equipment and facilities.
- If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to move large animals to available shelter or turn them outside. This decision should be determined based on the type of disaster and the soundness and location of the shelter.
- All animals should have some form of identification that will help facilitate their return.

Wildlife

- Wild animals often seek higher ground which, during floods, may eventually become submerged (i.e., island) and the animals become stranded. If the island is large enough and provides suitable shelter, you can leave food appropriate to the species. Animals have a flight response and will flee from anyone approaching too closely. If the animal threatens to rush into the water, back away from the island.
- Wildlife often seek refuge from flood water on upper levels of a home and may remain inside even after the water recedes. If you meet a rat or snake face to face, be careful but don't panic. Open a window or other escape route and the animal will probably leave on its own. Never attempt to capture a wild animal unless you have the training, protective clothing, restraint equipment and caging necessary to perform the job.
- Beware of an increased number of snakes and other predators who will try to feed on the carcasses of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals who have been drowned or crushed in their burrows or under rocks.
- During natural disasters, mosquitoes and dead animal carcasses may present disease problems. Outbreaks of anthrax, encephalitis and other diseases may occur. Contact your local emergency management office for help.

Further Assistance

- If you see any injured or stranded animal in need of assistance, or if you have any other questions or concerns about animal protection during an emergency situation, contact Wake County Animal Control at 919-856-6911.