

**SHELTER OPERATING MANUAL
FOR
THE RHODE ISLAND DISASTER ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM (RIDART)**

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- [Animal Daily Care](#) (6-8-F04)
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- [Volunteer Duty Roster](#) (6-8-F15)
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- [Log of Volunteer Hours](#) (6-8-F17)
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SIGNAGE (6-8-S)

- [Control Your Pet](#) (6-8-S01)
- [Arrow](#) (6-8-S02)
- [Registration Area](#) (6-8-S03)
- [Banding Area](#) (6-8-S04)
- [Dog Walk Area](#) (6-8-S05)
- [Loading Area](#) (6-8-S06)
- [Isolation Area](#) (6-8-S07)
- [Exit](#) (6-8-S08)
- [Bite Warning and Quarantine](#) (6-8-S09)

See also:

[Incident Command \(ICS\) Forms](#) in Section 10 of the DEM ERP or via the [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\) Download Center](#)
 <http://www.nimsonline.com/download_center/index.htm>

PURPOSE

Emergency animal care is designed to meet the needs of domestic animals and their owners in a disaster.

Pet owners are responsible for their own animals, and they should be prepared to continue care, even in emergencies, such as a hurricane evacuation. Commercial operations such as farms, boarders, and breeders can be expected to provide for their animals under even more extreme conditions. Preparedness is simply due diligence. For wildlife, the struggle for survival is normal.

Still, there will be occasions when assistance, such as emergency animal sheltering, is needed. Emergencies may come without warning, when owner's preparations are inadequate, or when individuals, private boarders (e.g., pet-friendly hotels, kennels, or animal hospitals), and local animal control are overwhelmed.

Before, during and after such an emergency, the Rhode Island Disaster Animal Response Team (RIDART) helps provide care for domestic animals (household pets and livestock). In compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), RIDART is managed through the Incident Command System. RIDART is activated by the Animal Response Team Leader. Once activated, RIDART may provide for rescue, triage, temporary sheltering, and/or transport to veterinary clinics or alternate boarding facilities.

This Manual is intended to guide RIDART in emergency animal sheltering operations.

See also:

DHS, FEMA, [NIMS Compliance and Technical Assistance](http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/nims_compliance.shtm)
<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/nims_compliance.shtm>;
EMAC, [NIMS On-line](http://www.nimsonline.com/) <<http://www.nimsonline.com/>>, especially [NIMS – The Incident Command System](#) in the [NIMS Document](#);
USDA, APHIS, [Animal Welfare Regulations](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/awr.shtml)
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/awr.shtml>.

PRIORITIES

1. Protect the health and safety of staff, clients, and visitors.
2. Protect animals. These include:
 - Household pets – dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, small mammals (gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits, potbelly pigs), reptiles, fish, arachnids.
Note: Service animals such as guide dogs (not pets but animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities) can stay with their owners in shelters managed by the American Red Cross; so they will generally not require sheltering in a RIDART-managed facility. For clarification by the US Department of Justice and the National Association of Attorneys General, see [ADA Business Brief: Service Animals](http://www.ada.gov/svcanimb.htm) <<http://www.ada.gov/svcanimb.htm>> and [Commonly Asked Questions About Service Animals](http://www.ada.gov/animal.htm) <<http://www.ada.gov/animal.htm>>.

- Farm livestock. Note: Large animals such as horses, cattle, mules, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas, and emus must be sheltered in separate locations identified and pre-arranged by local animal control or RIDART.
 - Animals that are not allowed in a RIDART-managed shelter include wild or feral animals, poisonous snakes or reptiles, and endangered or threatened species.
3. Protect property that is critical to shelter operations.
 4. Protect the environment.

SERVICES THAT RIDART PROVIDES

- Recruiting and organizing animal rescue teams,
- Helping owners to evacuate their animals from the site of an emergency,
- Organizing temporary animal shelters for response and recovery,
- Providing animal care in shelters,
- Triaging emergency animal care,
- Keeping records of animal identification, ownership, and care,
- Reuniting animals with owners.

INCIDENT SEVERITY AND RESPONSE LEVELS

An incident can be considered an animal-care emergency when conditions pose a threat to animals and an appropriate response exceeds the capacity of Local Animal Control. Such an incident could accompany a catastrophic flood, fire, hurricane, blizzard, drought, release of hazardous material, power outage, or evacuation of a damaged, unsafe, or inhumane facility.

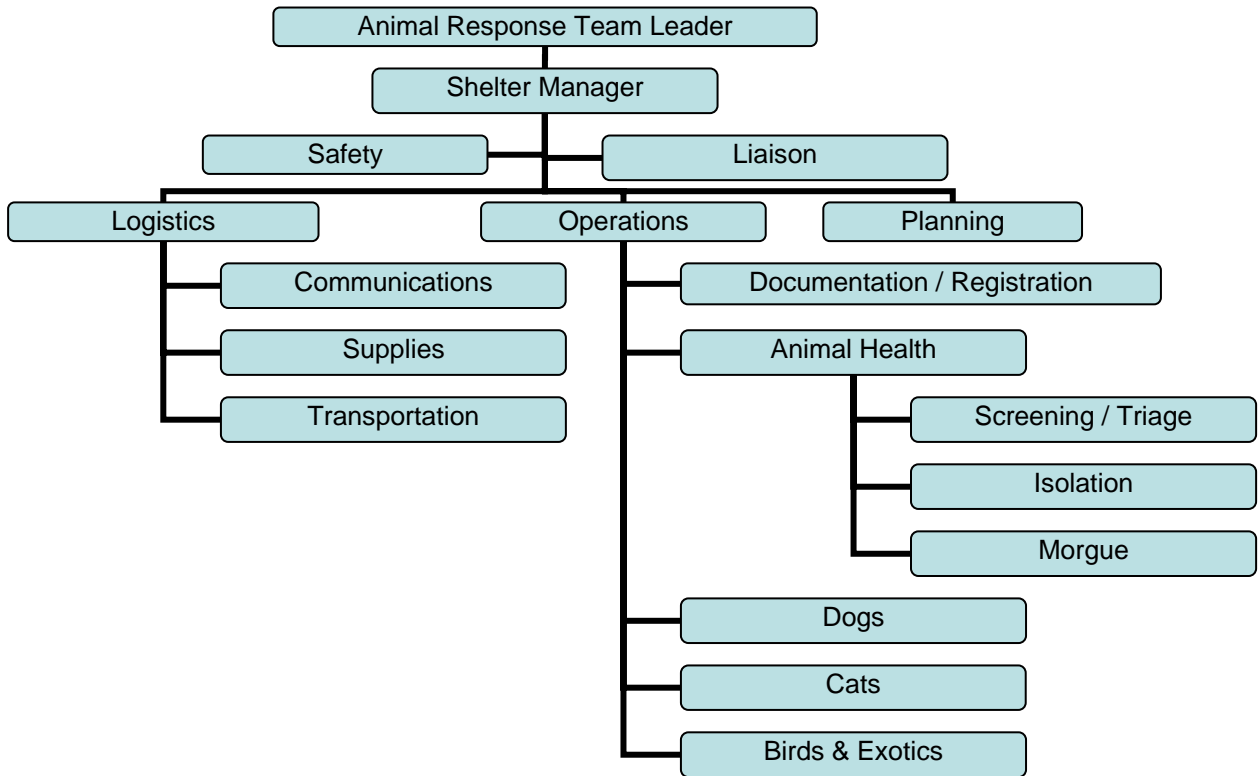
In general, emergency response should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the hazards that an incident brings. The greater the threat to the environment and public safety and welfare, the larger and more urgent the response.

Incident severity is often ranked from 1 to 3 or 4, with a “Level 1” incident considered minor and a “Level 4” severe. Thresholds depend on the specific hazards of an incident, but the response can be expected to increase proportionately:

- Level 1 (Minor) – Single source response, the first responder or Local On-Scene Coordinator (LOSC, normally the Animal Control Officer).
- Level 2 (Moderate) – Local On-Scene Coordinator plus mutual aid (e.g., by mutual aid agreement with Local Animal Control from neighboring towns and/or a few, select RIDART members).
- Level 3 (Major) – Full RIDART engagement, plus or minus selected mutual aid resources (e.g., Animal Control Officers and/or DARTs from neighboring cities or towns).
- Level 4 (Severe) – State-level response, including potential activation of the RI Disaster Animal Response Team (RIDART) by the State Veterinarian.

ORGANIZATION

Responsibility and authority for companion animal shelters will be organized:



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Animal Owners

Insofar as possible, owners must care for their own animals in a shelter, under RIDART supervision. Shelter Managers or their designees will normally require the following:

- Only animals that are prepared – healthy, properly identified and vaccinated, manageable, and restrained (in a crate or cage and on a leash) – will be admitted to the emergency animal care center.
- Owners are responsible for providing food, water, sanitation, and hands-on care during approved visiting hours.
- Owners are responsible for providing and administering all medications. (Medications generally will not be kept with the animal.)
- Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. Whether outdoors or indoors, owners must gather and dispose of pet waste and keep crates clean.

See also the [Pet Owner Sheltering Agreement](#).

The Shelter Manager reserves the right to supervise owners' visits and to refuse animals that appear to be aggressive or in poor health.

All RIDART Volunteers

Enrollment

All volunteers must be formally enrolled in RIDART. Requirements include:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Submit a complete application, including information on response readiness, training, and health status.
- Pass a background check.
- Sign a pledge to follow the RIDART Code of Conduct.
- Current tetanus vaccination.
- Rabies vaccination is not generally required, but it is recommended, especially if interacting with aggressive animals or quarantined animals

Code of Conduct

RIDART reserves the right to deny membership to applicants whose official record (arrests, violations of vehicle or vessel operator licenses, and outstanding warrants) raises doubts about their dependability, especially if that record includes a felony, substance abuse, violence, or neglect of people or animals. Supervisors have the authority to immediately deactivate any RIDART representative for behavior that is contrary to the following:

- Volunteers shall report to and remain in contact with the appropriate ICS authority and confine their activities to the stated mission and directives of the Incident Action Plan.
- DART volunteers must not self-deploy. Authorization by the Animal Response Team Leader is required.
- Volunteers shall identify any assignments that are beyond their capabilities and notify their supervising authority of this limitation.
- While representing RIDART, volunteers will not advocate or otherwise promote positions – political, religious, organizational, financial, or ideological – that are not in conformity with the official position of RIDART.
- While on-site for a disaster response, all RIDART volunteers must display their current identification, preferably a RIDART identification vest and badge.
- While participating in any RIDART-related activities, volunteers shall project a professional manner and appearance. In particular, the following will not be tolerated:
 - Violation of any laws,
 - Consumption of alcoholic beverages or possession, use, or selling of any illegal drugs,
 - Illegal use or display of a firearm,
 - Public outbursts or derogatory remarks about other organizations or volunteers.
- Volunteers shall observe all safety rules and regulations and shall know and follow instructions for proper use of equipment.

- DART members must not use or authorize the use of the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of RIDART, except in conformance with RIDART policy. Information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with RIDART is confidential and can be disclosed or used only with the expressed authorization of RIDART.
- Volunteers must in no way influence the conduct of RIDART so as to confer financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation. Volunteers shall not accept or seek on behalf of anyone else, any financial advantage or gain, other than the nominal value of affiliation with RIDART.
- Volunteers who suspect a conflict of interest (e.g., between a RIDART assignment and their own personal, professional, or financial interest) shall disclose such potential conflict to the RIDART point of contact upon becoming aware of it. The individual must absent him or herself during deliberations and refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.
- Volunteers shall not accept personal gratuities. All offers of donations shall be directed to an officer of RIDART.
- Volunteers shall not enter private property to perform RIDART duties without verbal permission from the owner and a supervising authority or without a law-enforcement escort.
- Volunteers will be required to document or participate in documentation for each rescue in a timely manner, and submit documentation to a supervising authority.
- Volunteers shall transport animals only to facilities that have been designated by the supervising authority.
- Volunteers shall refrain from taking photographs of people without their written permission. Any photos that are taken will not be used for public display without written permission of the owner.
- In situations in which an animal(s) is rescued and transported from a property without prior permission of the animal's owner, the rescuer must leave readily visible, written notification of the removal on the property.

Common Tasks

1. Prepare personal/home matters, including care for dependents and necessary supplies for the duration of activation.
2. Bring at least a 3-day supply of food, drinking water, clothes, medication, bedding (sleeping bag, pad, and pillow), toiletries, rain gear, and other day-to-day necessities. Do not wear shorts, open-toed shoes, or orange outer garments in the shelter.
3. Report to the assigned location (e.g., command post, information center, staging area).
4. Report to the immediate supervisor.
5. Ensure that the arrival time and location are properly recorded.
6. Obtain a situation briefing and assignment.
7. Acquire necessary approvals (e.g., for field deployment), material and forms, supplies, and safety gear and procedures.
8. Stick with your assignment until you are reassigned or replaced. Any job left unattended can interrupt the integrity of shelter operations as a whole.

9. Do not talk to reporters or other members of the news media yourself. Instead, direct press to the Public Information Officer (PIO). Only the PIO speaks to the media. If you are not sure who the PIO is, refer inquirers to your supervisor.
10. Identify and brief subordinates on the situation, incident organization, safety, reporting relationship, and duties.
11. Maintain personal log of activities and hours worked, using appropriate administrative forms.
12. Brief superior on activities during deployment.
13. Ensure that exit or demobilization is properly recorded.

Be careful!
Good faith and due diligence are required.
Volunteers cannot be spared liability for their own reckless or willful misconduct.
Be safe!
Above all, avoid putting yourself or others in danger.

Safety

Safety is the responsibility of all response personnel to apply and to monitor. Field work should not be undertaken unless all the following conditions are met:

- A supervisor is aware of your present location and activities.
- Response activities being undertaken are those assigned.
- You are qualified and competent to undertake response duties and associated activities (e.g., operate a boat, pump, vehicle, generator, etc.)
- Conditions are safe, and your activities do not put yourself and others at risk.
- One or more team members or volunteers are present to provide assistance if you are injured or in trouble. In other words, you should never work alone. Two is the minimum number of people to be present whenever contact with an animal is possible.
- Location of first aid supplies is known and readily available.
- Qualified first aid or medical attendant is known and readily available.
- Radio or line communications is fully functional to seek medical or rescue assistance.
- Transportation to medical station is available.
- Activities under your supervision or by others do not pose a risk to you or your team members.

Cease activities and report immediately to a supervisor if any one of the above conditions is not present.

When in doubt . . . stop and ask. Report all accidents and injuries

Injuries

Injuries to volunteers are to be reported to a Staff Member immediately. The Staff Member is to assess the extent of injuries. Each injury will be dealt with on an individual basis, and appropriate action should be taken.

Stress

Disaster work can be a unique, rewarding, and demanding experience. Under tough conditions people get to know one another quickly. Emergency responders often become like a family, working, eating, in effect, living together. They share a sense of adventure and excitement as well as a purpose. Whatever the stresses of normal everyday life, they become more intense during disasters.

Among the common symptoms of stress are headaches, upset stomach, diarrhea, or poor concentration, feelings of irritability and restlessness. You may become tired of the disaster, of talking or even thinking about it. You may want a break from coworkers and victims or just time to be alone. You may feel frustrated or guilty because you miss your family but are unavailable to them physically or emotionally, due to your focus on the disaster, fatigue, or the like. Phone calls home can be rewarding but also frustrating. You may feel your family and friends simply cannot understand what you're going through. If they become irritated, it can compound the problem, and a sense of isolation and estrangement can follow.

It is the responsibility of every Team member to check workmates for such signs of work-related stress. Report any such signs to a staff member as soon as possible.

The Staff Member should immediately talk to that volunteer: "What are you feeling?" "What do you need?" The Staff Member may ask coworkers what they have noticed. Consult other Staff for their opinions: should the volunteer continue in the current assignment, move to another assignment, or leave for the day? Discuss these options with the volunteer, and make a decision based on what is best for the volunteer. At the outset, it might be best to take at least a 15-minute break from the assignment.

There are many things you can do to manage such stress. When packing for the disaster, take a few mementos from home to make accommodations more personal and comfortable and to help you feel connected. Try to get regular exercise consistent with your physical condition away from the disaster scene. Try to do things that ordinarily help you relax, such as listening to music, running, reading a good book, or taking a hot bath. Get enough sleep, and try to eat regularly even if you're not hungry. Try to avoid foods high in sugar, fats and sodium, such as donuts and fast foods. To be sure your body is getting the nutrients it needs, consider vitamins or mineral supplements. Avoid excessive use of alcohol and coffee. (Caffeine is a stimulant and should also be used in moderation as it affects the nervous system, making you feel edgy.)

Although you need time alone on long disaster operations, you should also spend time with co-workers, particularly if you are a newcomer to disaster work. Arrange respite time, sometimes with co-workers, away from the disaster scene. You will probably find others who enjoy similar activities and who are interested in doing things together (e.g., a movie, dinner, volleyball, a picnic). Humor helps ease the tension, but use it carefully. The nerves of victims and co-workers may be raw. Feelings may be easily hurt, especially if they are the brunt of "disaster humor." So, it is important both to recognize that things, even in an emergency, can be funny but also to express that recognition discreetly, with respect for others who might disagree.

When on the job, it is important to take breaks, especially if you find yourself making mistakes, getting short with people, or unable to concentrate. Stay in touch with family and friends back home. Write or call. Sharing your stories and feelings with them and listening to theirs helps prevent the sense of being a stranger when you return home.

*Remember: Volunteers work as a team.
Taking care of each other is part of the job.*

Animal Response Team Leader

In Level 1-3, the Local ACO; in Level 4, the State Veterinarian

- Reports to Incident Command.
- Coordinates with outside agencies.
- Appoints core team members and backups, and oversees planning, training, and drills.
- Oversees the Shelter Manager's roles and responsibilities.
- Oversees threat assessment and evaluation of emergency response capabilities.
- Activates Team members appropriate for the incident severity level.
- When appropriate, requests or provides additional resources from/to support agencies.
- If the span of control is too large (e.g., more than 4-6 Shelter Managers), delegates shelter manager oversight to a Shelter Coordinator.
- Oversees accounting for and returning animals to their owners or, if unclaimed, to proper authorities.
- Reviews the incident with team members.
- Ensures problems arising from the incident are addressed, resolved and properly recorded.
- Serves as or designates a Public Information Officer (PIO) for the shelters.
- Submits an incident report.

*Only Public Information Officers are authorized to speak with the press.
Direct all general inquiries to the PIO or your supervisor.*

Shelter Manager

- Responsible for overall management and on-site operations of the emergency animal care center.
- Reports to the Animal Response Team Leader.
- Designates a backup Shelter Manager.
- Has authority to establish procedures, to approve exceptions to procedures, and, when appropriate, to dismiss volunteers and to refuse to accept animals.
- Initiates shelter operations.
- Ensures procedures are followed, with special attention to site safety.
- Alerts off-site members in the event of a threat to the shelter, such as medical-care or animal-control crises.
- Via Logistics, ensures an adequate level of supplies to the shelter, e.g., water, medical supplies, housekeeping, etc.

- Oversees individual assignments in consultation with subordinate supervisors. E.g., monitors check-in and check-out sheets to be sure that animals are receiving regular care at least twice per day.
- Maintains a log of active Team members/volunteers and their assignments.
- Assures proper procedure in the disposition of animals from the shelter.
 - Directs return of animals to their owners.
 - Arranges for proper disposition of unclaimed animals to appropriate foster and permanent placement agencies.
- Ensures that required forms and records are completed and maintained.
- Determines staff levels and supervises them.
- Coordinates with American Red Cross via the RIDART Liaison.
- Maintains incident log.
- Supervises demobilization of the shelter.
 - Inventories all supplies (administrative, shelter, team response kits, etc.) and arranges for restocking, as necessary.
 - Ensures that all shelters, carriers, cages, etc. are cleaned and put in proper order according to Plan.
 - Meets with shelter workers to review the response.
- Submits shelter report to Incident Commander.

Liaison

- Maintains an up-to-date list of contact information for RIDART stakeholders.
- Serves as the point of contact for the incident Public Information Officer (PIO) or the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- With authority from the Animal Response Team Leader or a designee, notifies RIDART members of activation.
- Contacts RIDART member and schedules staff.
- Coordinates procurement / delivery of supplies.
- Coordinates with the human shelters via the American Red Cross.
- Participates in shelter management meetings or briefings to monitor response status.
- Coordinates with other agencies (humane societies, rescue groups, animal control, veterinarians, boarders, kennels, groomers, etc.)
- Maintains log of contacts.

Operations

- Directs staff so that sheltered animals receive:
 - Safe shelter,
 - Food and water,
 - Medical care as needed,
 - 24-hour observation,
 - Exercise as directed by veterinarian,
 - Grooming as needed.
- Establishes a data recording and management system.
- Delegates work assignments.
- Ensures each animal has proper identification and paperwork.
- Checks in and assigns each incoming cage or designated holding area.
 - Assigns responsibilities for exercise schedule, feeding, care, grooming, observation and tracking progress of animals.

- Supervises all workers.
- Ensures all supplies are on hand.
- Schedules work hours for the remainder of the incident.
- Checks the credentials of all people coming into the shelter.
- Reports to Animal Health and coordinates all medical care in the shelter.
- Ensures proper filing of all forms at shelter.
- Using appropriate forms, registers evacuees and their animals.
 - Performs animal intake and health assessment.
 - Makes and files a photo of each animal with their owner(s).
 - Assigns animal to crate and properly labels crate with owner identification. (Animals without collars can receive only one ID tag, which will be attached to the outside of the crate or cage.)
- Maintains file of all animals currently in the shelter
- Assists owners when they come to walk / feed / care for their pet. During visiting hours, owners check-in and wait for their pet to be brought to the registration or exercise area for the owner to perform routine care.
- Notifies the Shelter Manager when owners are not caring for their pets on a regular schedule
- Coordinates with the on-site veterinarian to deal with pet health-care issues.
- Walks / feeds pets whose owners are unknown or who are otherwise unable to provide adequate care.
- Monitors animals for stress / behavior problems.
- Monitors supplies, food and environmental conditions.
- Assists in breaking-down and cleaning of the shelter and its equipment.

Safety Officer

- Inspects the facilities to identify potential hazards for RIDART members and visitors.
- Halts any activity in the shelter that poses significant health and safety risks.
- Instructs RIDART members to reduce exposure to health and safety hazards.
- Oversees the selection and use of proper personal protection equipment (PPE) and supplies (vaccines, hand sanitizers, etc.) for team members.
- Oversees the maintenance of pure water and food on-site.
- Recommends appropriate vaccinations, and biosecurity measures for operations.
- Defines first-aid supplies to be carried by team and volunteers.
- Oversees proper treatment or referral of injuries and illness among staff and the public while on-site.

Planning

- Maintains and recommends updates in the Shelter Manual.
- Maintains records of risks and resources.
- Maintains a list of volunteers, their skills, vehicles, equipment and special needs
- Coordinates with the Shelter Manager and the RIDART Liaison to plan for the number of RIDART members and volunteers needed according to the number of pets in the Shelter.
- Develops and distributes the Incident Action Plan and pertinent information to the team.
- Works with Operations and Logistics to keep abreast of conditions, especially as they affect staffing needs for upcoming shifts.

- Communicates situation reports to the RIDART Liaison and the Shelter Manager to plan for the next operational period.
- Provides input to the incident review report
- Reviews and recommends improvements in the Shelter Operating Manual.

Logistics

- Makes and posts signage in each area of the shelter to direct traffic of visitors and staff.
- Oversees acquisition, storage, and distribution of supplies and equipment.
- Coordinates with the nearest ARC Shelter Manager for location of trash disposal, pet walking areas, and needs (food, water, rest) of the activated RIDART members.
- Inventories facility space and notes present conditions.
- Configures space in the facility.
 - Identifies a kennel area, ideally at least two well-separated parts, one for dogs and one for cats. Insofar as possible, males and females should also be separated. Animals from the same family may be housed together, if the owner approves, and if there is adequate space for each animal.
 - Identifies an area for very small animals: rabbits, gerbils, hamsters and “pocket pets.”
 - Identifies an Isolation Area for injured, sick or pregnant animals.
 - Identifies a Morgue, which needs to be separated from all other areas, and should have chairs and privacy. The sign over this area will not say “MORGUE.” It will be designated “AREA TWO.”
 - Identifies areas for non-medical and medical supplies, including a lock box for regulated pharmaceuticals.
- Ensures emergency supplies are properly stocked.
 - Sets up trash cans, fans, plastic sheeting, crates and supplies.
 - Ensures adequate supplies of crates, food, plastic bags, disinfectant, etc.
- Coordinates with the RIDART Liaison for special supply needs.
- Oversees shelter cleanup and conducts a final check of supplies, equipment, and the area.

Communications

- Serves as the coordinator of the on-site RIDART command post.
- Keeps a list of communications contacts.
- Identifies appropriate communications media (radio, cell phone, etc.) for the facility to ensure team members can communicate with one another.
- Maintains and tracks on-site communications equipment.
- Serves as the point of contact for support agencies (e.g., suppliers, animal ambulance).
- Coordinates compliance with communications regulations and protocols.
- Maintains maps and contingency evacuation routes.
- During demobilization, reassembles, inventories, and maintains communications equipment.
- Submits summary report.

Animal Health

- Identifies, recruits, and approves RIDART members who are qualified and willing to provide veterinary medical support.
 - Develops training requirements.
 - Advises the safety officer on personal protection equipment and supplies (vaccines, hand sanitizers, etc.) for team members.
 - Advises the safety officer on water and food contamination, vaccinations, and biosecurity measures.
- Defines first-aid supplies to be carried by team and volunteers
- Identifies materials and assesses shelter layout for the prevention and control of animal disease.
- Makes shelter inspections to ensure health, safety and well being of animals
- Makes on-site recommendation, as needed, to change the Response Level
- Administers animal medical care on-site and at the shelter, with emphasis on biosecurity, triage, isolation, and morgue.
- Supervises maintenance of medical records.
- Oversees proper handling and appropriate records of controlled substances.
- Performs or supervises triage for animal intake and release.
- Advises the Shelter Manager on medical and non-medical evacuation requirements.
- Decides if animals should be transported to off-site medical facilities.
- Oversees medical documentation.
- Provides care and medical instructions on released animals as required.
- Reviews medical supplies and equipment for restocking.
- Provides to the Shelter Manager an incident summary with recommendations for improvements.

Transportation

- Develops transportation procedures for the Shelter, particularly for intake and discharge of animals and supplies.
- Ensures proper animal transportation is provided from the shelter.
- Inspects transport vehicles.
- Works with Communications when alternate routes are required or unforeseen incidents involving traffic, equipment or animal emergencies en route.
- Provides input to incident review report.
- Reviews volunteer requirements and ensures the call list is up-to-date.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Inspect Facility

Prior to using a facility as an Emergency Animal Care Center, a RIDART member will inspect the site and assess its condition, making note of equipment, furniture or materials present as well as the integrity and cleanliness of the site. The facility must at least have:

- Operational water, sewer, and power,
- Adequate lighting and ventilation,
- Unobstructed entrance and exit, including emergency exits,

- A secure perimeter,
- Functional restrooms,
- Non-carpeted floors in areas for animals.

See also [Developing a Site for Emergency Animal Care](#).

Configure Space in the Facility

The facility must be safe and accessible, however entry is also restricted, requiring check-in and check-out at the registration/intake area.

Kennel areas are off limits to the general public and must be secure at all times.

Set Up the RIDART Command Post

The RIDART Command Post should be established in a separate and secure space that is also close to shelter operations.

- Close off command post and shelter areas to public.
- Set up communications and a secure records storage system.
- The Registration Area is where victims may bring their animals and request first aid or shelter.
- Check that Kennel Areas are set up and staffed according to procedure.
- Ensure supply area for carriers/cages open and available.
- Ensure General Supply area stocked and available under strict supervision
- Secure all areas. Doors may be locked at night, but when animals are in residence, the facility will never be left unattended. At least two (2) RIDART members or volunteers must be present at all times.
- Immediately communicate medical emergencies which may arise after transportation to the shelters.

Post Signs

- Clearly mark all doors to the area as a “DART Shelter”.
- Clearly mark one (1) door for “Animal Intake.”
- Post RIDART policies and procedures for pet care and feeding.
- Designate and clearly post a “dog walk” or exercise area.

Establish Registration and Intake Area

The Registration Area authorizes – monitors, controls, and records – the movement of all people and animals into and out of the facility.

- Establish and maintain a check-in point and log for shelter personnel.
 - Shelter staff must log in as soon as they arrive and log out when they leave.
 - Each, logged-in staff member should be issued a vest with an identification card and an assignment.
- Anyone who approaches the shelter and who is not an enrolled Team member (including pet owners), should be directed to request a “VISITOR” badge at the Registration Area. Anyone who is not so authorized to enter should be directed to leave.

Every effort must be made to have all forms filled out and signed by both the owner and an authorized member of RIDART before the shelter takes custody of the animal.

All animals must be processed through the Registration Area, unless there is a medical emergency, in which case the animal must go directly to the Isolation Area.

- Designate a space for RIDART members to fill out the animal intake forms and do a health assessment on the animal.
 - Provide a table for owner and pet registration, including a photo of the animal with its owner. (To ease stress on the animals, owners, and staff, it may help to send make the photographs outside the registration area, e.g., in the parking area or a short distance from where owners and pets are lining up.)
- Implement animal intake procedure:
 - Introduce yourself to the animal's owner.
 - Explain how RIDART can help, but be brief.
 - Give the owner a copy of the Pet Owner Rules to keep.
 - Ask the owner to complete a Release Form. Use one form for each animal.
 - Ask the owner to provide proof of vaccinations (such as shot records or rabies tag), to be noted on the registration and intake forms. Note: It is understandable that during a disaster or evacuations, some pet owners may have lost such proof, but through the registration form, the pet owner must accept the risks of boarding that pet in a shelter.
 - Each animal must have an ID tag, identified with:
 1. A unique shelter number, consisting of the name of the shelter followed by a three digit number. (E.g. Boss-001, Boss-002, Boss-003, etc; or Thayer-001, Thayer-002, etc. If more than one person is checking-in animals, it may be useful to have the second person start counting at -500, -501, -502, etc.)
Plus, when available:
 2. The animal's name;
 3. The owner's last name, confirmed with a photo ID;
 4. An owner's ID #, either the last five digits of a driver's license or a documented birth date (mm/dd/yy).
Hence, for example, if Jane Doe, born on July 28, 1983, checks in the 24th dog at Thayer Arena, and it's name is Spot, the ID should read: "Thayer-024 Spot Doe 07/28/83." If Spot is an anonymous rescue, with no known owner yet, its ID would simply read "Thayer-024."
- Emphasize the importance of working together to maintain an unbroken, documented chain-of-custody. For example, if the owner designates someone else to pick up the pet, that designation must be presented to the shelter in writing, and the designee will be required to provide the owner's ID# number as well as personal identification at the time of pick up.
- Assign the animal to an appropriately sized crate or cage. It must be large enough for the animal to stand up and turn around. Ensure that water as well as a towel or bedding are provided. Immediately label

the crate with the owner's name and the pet's name, along with any special needs.

- When owners bring their own crates, note that fact on the intake form, make sure they are clearly labeled with the owners' names, and place the crates 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.
- Put all paperwork is put in a plastic pouch that stays with the animal until it is returned to the owner.
- It may be calming to drape the crate with a sheet or other light fabric. The covered crate and dimmed light, as in a den, can reduce the animal's exposure to distractions and increase a sense of security.

Note: DART may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive

- DART may refuse admittance to any animal that appears uncontrollable or dangerously aggressive. At a minimum, aggressive animals must be securely contained and the owner will be responsible for its care and feeding. If the owner does not have a muzzle, provide one for the duration of the stay in the shelter.
- Designate a space for RIDART members to log owners and animals in and out for daily care during visiting hours.
 - Twice each day, under RIDART supervision, owners are responsible for routine animal care (feeding, watering, exercising, cleaning, etc.).
 - At the discretion of the Shelter Manager (e.g., depending on the demand) visits may be staggered. For example:
 - Owner's last name beginning with letters A through L
– 8:00 to 8:20 AM and 5:00 to 5:20 PM.
 - Owner's last name beginning with letters M through Z
– 8:40 to 9:00 AM and 5:40 to 6:00 PM.

Establish Kennel Areas

Aim to separate species (dogs / cats / others) as well as animals who have special needs, who are sick, or who are aggressive.

All Areas

- Animals are to be housed in separate cages/stalls in areas breakdown by types of animals (dogs, cats, small animals, and "Area 2" or morgue). Insofar as possible, male and female animals should also be separated. There should be adequate space between the animals of opposite sexes, even if they are caged.
- All animals must have a RIDART ID tag and proper paperwork.
- All animals should be monitored every 15 minutes for the first hour in the shelter. Look for signs of stress, illness or injuries, and report them to the medical staff immediately.
- Animals will not be fed the first hour they are in the kennel. Water should be available at all times, unless the medical staff decides otherwise.
- Accurate records must be kept for each animal. After the first hour, animals are checked hourly. [Animal Daily Care](#) records must be completed accordingly.

Whenever possible, pet owners will feed, walk, and care for their own animals. The exception will be animals whose owners are unknown or who are staying at other ARC shelters and cannot travel to visit their animals.

- Animals must be fed once a day and walked at least twice a day. The Shelter Manager may require pet owners who fail to perform this minimum care or to use proper restraints (e.g., crated or leashed at all times) to remove their animals from the shelter.
- Any animal taken out for a walk must be signed out to the rightful owner and leashed. There are no exceptions.
- Only pet owners and RIDART members may remove animals from crates. Children will not be allowed to enter the shelter.
- Unless needs dictate, owners are responsible for administering all medications to pets. They should keep a record of these medications.
- Pets in the shelter will not have contact with other pets.
- 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.
- If an animal escapes from its cage or a designated area, it must be captured immediately. If this happens, any team member may call an "All Hands Alert" by announcing very loudly "Dog out!" or "Cat Out!" or the like. Everyone is to respond immediately when this announcement is made.
- An "All Hands Alert" may also be issued if someone is being attacked or bitten. The announcement for that is "Help."
- The Communications Coordinator is to be notified immediately if a volunteer is bitten, attacked or seriously injured in order to notify the Team Leader and appropriate Team members. The Team Leader will determine if outside assistance will be deployed to the shelter.
- All animals should be in their crates and kennel areas closed to visitors for quiet time from 9 PM to 7 AM.

Dog Area

- 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 volunteer specifically to maintain this area.
- DART members will perform regular "poop-patrol" walks to ensure animal owners have cleaned up the Dog Walk area.
- Provide separate isolation 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 veterinary facility as soon as possible. Contact the on-call RIDART veterinarian for assistance.
- Insofar as possible, isolate dogs that are in heat.

Cat Area

- 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 temperate extremes.
- All birds must be in fully ventilated cages. Provide food, water, identification tag, and newspaper for all cages.
- Insofar as possible, contact a RIDART member with bird expertise to assess the bird and the bird area location.
- Whenever possible, birds should be transported in their “home” cage.
- When necessary, 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

- By RI law, ferrets require a permit from Fish and Wildlife and 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 or special lighting.
- 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.
- The owner will be responsible for feeding and providing any bedding or natural materials (twigs, grass) required.

Housing Animals Off-site

No matter where they are sheltered, from the moment animals are registered until reclaimed by their owners, they remain in RIDART custody.

Important things to remember for volunteers taking an animal, or when animals must be moved to another location for any reason:

- DART volunteers may be given first opportunity to board these animals.
- Distribution of animals will be based on how much a volunteer is willing and able to care for the particular animal.
- All efforts should be made to keep pets from the same households together.
- The Staff will make travel arrangements for all animals being moved to another location.
- No animal is to be moved without proper handling apparel/equipment.
- RIDART paperwork will move with the animal, as well as an ID Tag
- While in the care of the RIDART volunteer, all animals will be monitored on a daily basis, and records will be kept, just as they would be at the shelter. Volunteers are to have regular contact with the animal's owner, and allow visits insofar as possible, if requested. Animals can be claimed by the owner directly from the volunteer, using the same procedure as stated in the section "Disposition of Animals During Recovery." When it is time for the owner to claim the animal(s) the owner will be notified and they must make arrangements with the RIDART Team member responsible for that animal. It is the responsibility of the owner to pick up the animal and complete the discharge form.

Important things to remember when outside facilities are taking animals:

- Only outside facilities approved by RIDART will be used.
- A member of RIDART will be assigned to monitor any outside facility used.
- Outside facilities must follow RIDART rules and regulations regarding handling and housing of animals.
- Outside facilities must allow their RIDART member to have ready access to the premises.
- Outside facilities must allow owners to visit their pets.
- Outside facilities must instruct their personnel to keep accurate records.
- Every effort will be made to abide by the requirements of the outside facility.
- Owners may claim their pets directly from the outside facility, using the same procedures as stated in the section "Disposition of Animals During Recovery."

- Payment for charges incurred at the outside facility will have been prearranged between RIDART and the pet owner, before the pet is transferred to that facility.
- As RIDART policy states unclaimed animals will be declared homeless and will be turned over to the local Animal Control Department, or an appropriate facility that accepts and adopts homeless animals.

Working Off-site

Rules of conduct while responding to an Incident in the field, outside the shelter:

- No team member is ever to work alone. Field crews must work in groups of no less than two (2). Larger groups may split up into smaller groups.
- Field crews going out more than ½ mile from the RIDART Command Post must use at least one motor vehicle.
- Field crews must have appropriate attire for the type of incident.
- If crews encounter an injured animal, they need to make an assessment of the animal's condition, and call in for instructions immediately.
- No members are to talk to the media while on assignment, unless authorized in advance.
- No team member is to respond to a water rescue without coordination with Command.

Animal Fatalities

Unfortunately, animals may come to the shelter dead (DOA) or in critical condition, and they may die while in our care. These situations must be handled with the utmost care and concern for both the animal and the owner.

- A dead animal will be described as a "CODE 2." At no time is any member to use the terms "Dead on arrival" or "Morgue" when speaking to, or in the vicinity of, the general public. The morgue is to be described as "AREA 2."
- Death of the animal must be noted in its [Animal Record](#).
- A dead animal will be taken to "Area 2" (morgue) for processing. No dead animal is to be left outside, or anywhere near the public areas around the Command Post. A Medical Staff person on duty must examine a dead animal. If there is no Medical Staff person on duty, the volunteer in charge of First Aid and one helper must examine the animal and declare it dead. If the animal has not been covered or put in a plastic bag, it needs to be. If clear plastic bags, or tarps/blankets to cover the body are available, they should be used, until the animal can be identified. The clear bags make it easier to see the coloring of the animal's fur. For small animal boxes, cardboard carriers and coolers will be made available as well.
- After the DOA has been processed, and placed in the Morgue, a Team Member needs to write a large number 2 in the upper right hand corner of the [Animal Record](#) to signify the death of the animal. If a Team Member believes that a certain DOA is a match, the Kennel Manager should be notified for further verification. If the DOA is a probable match, then, alerting all members in the registration area in case the owner shows up unexpectedly, proper precautions can be taken to assist the owner. All matches are "probable" until the owner confirms that the animal is their pet.

Notifying the Owner

- If there is a possible match, and we have the red dots on the RIDART Animal Release Form, then the owner will need to be contacted. Again, this is a very delicate matter and must be handled carefully. (The same type of message can be given to someone who is standing right there at the Registration table)
- A sample message is “(Mrs. Jones), this is (your name), with RIDART. We have a listing for your missing (dog, cat, etc.) We have received more animals since you were here, however, I need you to know that some of them are deceased.”
- Pause here, in case there is a response. Continue with “We have a (dog, cat , etc.) that is similar to your pet’s description. Are you able to come over for identification purposes, or are you able to designate someone to help you with this?”
- Depending on the answer, make notes on the back of the form, as to what the client’s intentions are. It is hard to predict what will happen.
- Give people every opportunity to talk, cry, ask questions, or say nothing at all. Ask if there is anyone there with them. If not, ask if you can call someone for them. The person may come right over, or they may not. They may send someone else. (If they do, make sure that the person coming can positively identify the pet.)

Express our/your condolences. A simple I’m sorry for your loss is often enough.

- Clients arriving to identify DOAs, or clients who are about to learn that their pet did not survive, are to be taken to a special “private” section, in or near “Area 2,” for the purpose of identifying the animal. Two RIDART Team members should be present to assist the owner. Anything can happen. The client may not be able to actually view the remains. While the client should never be forced to do this, someone has to make the identification. Use your own judgment. Some clients may want to spend some time with the pet. Some clients may want to touch or hold the pet. This is allowed. They may have as much time with the pet as they need. You should only leave if they request to be left alone.
- Information on pet bereavement should be offered to clients whose pet has died. Owners may not accept the offer at the time, but let them know that support is available on-line, if they want it later. Helpful sites include:
 - Moira Anderson Allen, [Ten Tips on Coping With Pet Loss](#) (6-8-A16), also available as a brochure at <<http://www.pet-loss.net/index.html>>.
 - HSUS, [Coping with the Death of Your Pet](#) <http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/coping_with_the_death_of_your_pet/>
 - AVMA, [Understanding Your Feeling of Loss When Your Animal Dies](#), <http://www.avma.org/animal_health/brochures/pet_loss/pet_loss_brochure.pdf>, and [Grief Counseling, Pet Loss Support Hot Lines](#) <<http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/goodbyefriend/plhotlines.asp>>
 - APLB, [Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement](#), <<http://www.aplb.org/index.html>>
 - Animal Chaplains, [Pet Loss and Death, Grief and Bereavement Support Services](#)

<<http://www.interfaithofficiants.com/CompanionAnimalPages/CompanionAnimalClergysupportResources.html>>

Disposal of Deceased Animals

- Some people will want to take the animal's body, while others will not. Some people will not have any idea what to do with the body.
- The animal's body may remain at the shelter only for a brief time, while the owner makes arrangements.
- RIDART may be able to arrange for the town where the event happened to dispose of the body. However, this disposal option may be a group burial, and the owner should be made aware of this.
- RIDART can suggest local pet cemeteries and crematories, but the cost would be the responsibility of the owner.
- No matter what the owner decides, "Release of Deceased Animal to the Owner" must be written on the animal's Emergency Animal Care Registration Form, signed, and dated by the owner or his/her agent.
- RIDART will arrange for disposal of all unclaimed animals

Thoughts for Team Members

- This assignment will be the hardest, but most necessary, part of this entire program.
- The death of an animal is always difficult. It can be as hard on the team member as it is on the client. Do what you can to help.
- Be mindful of the possibility in a disaster that animal owners may have also recently lost family, friends, possessions, and homes.
- If at any time during this assignment, you should feel the need to remove yourself from the situation, tell someone immediately. Do not wait until you are overwhelmed. All of us understand, and we will do our best to help each other, as well as the clients and their pets.

Disposition of Animals During Recovery

- Supervise the returning of animals to owner. When an owner comes to claim their animal(s), there is a strict procedure that needs to be followed. This procedure applies to not only the RIDART Kennel, but also to any holding facility we use. The procedure is as follows.

We must safeguard against the wrong person taking a pet out of the shelter, and we must do all we can to give an owner only the correct animal.

- To authorize a release, refer the owner to the Shelter Manager.
- The Shelter Manager checks to be sure the owner's personal identification matches owner/agent information on the [Animal Record](#).
- The Shelter Manager assigns a Team Member to find the animal and match up the two copies.
- The owner is asked to identify the animal as his or her own.
- The Team Member reviews the care given to the animal while in the RIDART shelter and informs the owner actions that are required for follow-up care.

- If the animal is any type other than a dog or farm animal, it may only leave in some type of carrier or covered box (RIDART will try to provide this if necessary).
- The owner signs the Pet Return to Owner Form.
- The animal is returned to the owner.
- All paperwork for the animal is stapled together and put in the special file for returned animals.

Special Notes

- If the holding facility is not a RIDART shelter, a Shelter Manager may be unavailable. The Team Member responsible for the animal will follow the same instructions as listed above.
- If someone other than the owner is there to claim the animal, check for a documented record from the owner regarding whom he or she has designated to claim the animal. If we do not have that record, every effort must be made to contact the owner before the animal can be released. In addition, the person claiming the animal must have personal identification, and must leave a phone number. If the Team Member has serious doubts about someone claiming an animal, a Staff Member is to be notified immediately, and a joint decision will be made.
- Initiate foster pet care personnel if necessary.
- Ensure medical records and medications go with animal.
- Ensure medical review and sign off by vet.

Contingencies for Threats to the Facility

Assess the Threat

- Integrity of the structure (roof, walls, doors, windows);
- Utilities (ventilation, water/sewer, electricity/lights, telecommunications);
- Exterior features (parking lots, storage space, access);
- Site security.

When Threat to Health and Safety is Clear, Present or Imminent . . .

1. Immediately evacuate or shelter in-place, whichever would be safer. Protection of people is the top priority.
2. Contact local public safety services (fire and/or police).
3. Notify Animal Response Team Leader.
4. Remove animals if and only if they can be removed concurrently, without delaying or otherwise compromising human protection.

Helping animals is NOT an adequate reason to enter, occupy, or reenter a dangerous site.

When NOT an Immediate Threat to Health and Safety . . .

1. Notify Animal Response Team Leader of the threat and the need to prepare for evacuation.
2. Notify staff, clients, and visitors to begin the process of relocation.
3. Designate a staging area for evacuated staff and animals along with a go kit of essentials (identifications plus care needs – restraints, food, water, medications – for 72 hours).

4. Place animals in carriers that are suitable for transportation.
5. Ensure accurate identification of all animals and all veterinary records for evacuated animals that need care.
6. Create and confirm a database back-up offsite.
7. Remove critical records.
8. Shut off utilities, such as gas and water, to avoid secondary damage.
9. If time permits, back-up and remove non-critical records as well as spare equipment and supplies.

Long-Term Sheltering

- In some disasters, there is the possibility that the response and recovery operations may stretch into weeks or months. Most RIDART 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, RIDART members and animal shelters focus on three possibilities:
 - Fostering in the local community. People willing to foster animals are typically people who are members of their local humane society or shelter. 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.
 - 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 pets back.
 - Boarding animals at veterinary 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 veterinary clinics begin to open back up for business, arrangements can be made for long-term boarding of sick or injured animals.

Closing the Shelter

- Authority for closing the shelter rests with the Animal Response Team Leader in consultation with Incident Command. That decision will be communicated directly to the RIDART Liaison or the Shelter Manager. Once the decision has been made to close the shelter, break down can be initiated and may, if necessary, be phased in over time if some animals are still in residence. The Shelter Manager may request the RIDART Liaison to call in extra volunteers to assist in breakdown if needed. In lieu of this, other available volunteers may be used.
- 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.
- When the incident is declared over and all the animals have been claimed or transferred, all members at the scene will be expected to help with the tear down and clean up of the area used, cleaning of the equipment and transportation of equipment back to the storage unit.
- The Shelter Manager or a designee is responsible for assigning responsibilities for demobilization of the shelter.

The facility should be left as clean or cleaner than before the shelter was set 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 Shelter Manager will 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.
- All materials, including forms, vests, equipment and supplies will be returned to the appropriate organization.
- Reports are to be filled out by the Staff, after an incident is over. All information about the event should include, but is not limited to:
 - Where did incident take place?
 - What kind of incident was it?
 - Who was involved?
 - How many animals did the team handle?
 - How long did incident last?
 - Follow up forms going to any officials we worked with.
 - Other documents.
 - Prints of photos taken.
 - Summarize medical problems, deaths and disposition of animals.
- A debriefing meeting will be held within ten (10) days after the event is declared over, to finalize the following business:
 - Do any of the team members need stress debriefing? If so, arrangements need to be made as soon as possible.
 - How did the program work?
 - How was the volunteers' response time?
 - What were the problem areas?
 - What would or should change?
 - What were our strengths?
 - What supplies and equipment need restocking?

- All Team Members involved in the incident will fill out a survey asking about how the incident went for them.
- All paperwork is to be turned to the Shelter Manager. 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 Shelter Manager and the RIDART Liaison, receipts for purchases and thank you letters. This documentation will form the basis of the RIDART report submitted to Animal Response Team Leader. Information on individuals included on these forms will be considered confidential.
- The Shelter Manager will submit a written report to the Animal Response Team Leader. This report will be based on the logs kept at the Shelter. It will include the number and types of animals housed, an assessment of RIDART 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.
- The Animal Response Team Leader will write thank-you letters to people, agencies or companies who assisted RIDART during the disaster. The thank-you letters will be signed by an officer or board member of RIDART. These letters should be written within a week of the closing of the shelter and will form part of the documentation of the incident.