



**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR  
ANIMALS,  
AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL  
EMERGENCY PLANNERS**

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Manitoba Emergency Response for Animals (MERA)

*Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*

## **Hurricane Katrina, August 2005**



What lessons should we learn about the care of animals during an emergency?

## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*

# Care for pets will complicate the management of an emergency

People were not prepared to evacuate without their animals, even if that meant putting themselves at risk



## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*

# **The value in preparing: education, planning, and investments**

The residents of Mississippi and Louisiana are no different than anywhere else – they are motivated to care for their animals. Use this motivation before an emergency, not during.



## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*



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# Care of pets works hand-in-hand with the care of people

Reduce stress on people  
and animals

Removes an excuse for  
people to leave

Evacuees will evacuate  
with their animals – it  
makes sense to be  
ready for them



## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*



## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*

# Manage media and public interest

The ability to care for animals (like all other parts of your emergency planning), will be closely scrutinized by media – and sharply criticized if there are complaints



## *Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*

# **The care of animals is important**

Emergencies are stressful on animals. Our responsibility for humane treatment applies at all times, and especially during an emergency





***How can municipalities prepare to  
care for animals during an  
emergency?***

*Building capacity in your municipality*



# **1. Identify your needs by conducting a risk assessment**

**How many pets do you have in the municipality? Where are they? What unique challenges would you face if they had to be evacuated?**

*Building capacity in your municipality*



## **2. Identify available resources**

**How could your animal control officer be used in an emergency? What local groups could provide assistance? What individuals could provide assistance?**



*Building capacity in your municipality*



### **3. Write procedures for care of pets into your emergency plan**

**What pressures could you expect from animal owners during an emergency? How would you register animals? How would they be treated, fed, housed, and returned to their people? How can animal issues be included in your emergency plan exercises?**

*Building capacity in your municipality*



## **4. Develop education materials for pets owners and other audiences**

**What can pet owners do to prepare for an emergency (and lessen the burden on the municipality during an evacuation)? How should your Emergency Social Services staff deal with evacuated pets? How should first responders remove an animal from danger?**

*Building capacity in your municipality*



## **5. Develop a relationship with MERA**

**At what point would you ask MERA to provide assistance? Who would you contact? How would they fit into your command and control structure during an emergency?**

*Manitoba Emergency Response for Animals*



## **Manitoba Emergency Response for Animals (MERA)**

- ⌘ Initially organized in 2003 with a small group of people in the Winnipeg area
- ⌘ In response to gaps identified by Manitoba EMO and their efforts to build local capacity
- ⌘ Since 2005, affiliated with Manitoba Rural Search and Rescue

## *Manitoba Emergency Response for Animals*



### **What we do**

- ⌘ Provide assistance to municipalities when your ability to care for animals is overwhelmed. Deployed through a request to Manitoba EMO.
- ⌘ Exercise, train, and develop a strong group of locally-available volunteers for deployment during emergencies
- ⌘ Develop pre-emergency plans with partners that might require our assistance
- ⌘ Increase awareness and knowledge among pet owners

## **How we can work together**

- ⌘ Participate in public education activities, exercises, and training
- ⌘ Develop cooperative emergency planning – you need to understand our capabilities, and we need to know yours, if you're writing us into your emergency plan

# *Manitoba Emergency Response for Animals*



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**For more information, please contact:**

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