



North Valley Animal Disaster Group Standard Operating Guidelines

Title: VETERINARIANS

Objective: To provide cooperating veterinarians with guidelines for working with NVADG

Description:

The North Valley Animal Disaster Group works in coordination with emergency services including local Law Enforcement and Fire Departments. All of these agencies have adopted the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMMS) which incorporates the Incident Command System (ICS). As such, veterinarians are expected to work within the ICS system in order to provide consistent and clear communication and care while working with numerous volunteers. Disaster response operations are complicated and are carried out in a chaotic atmosphere. If veterinarians self-deploy to a disaster site independently, they unnecessarily complicate response efforts. We respect the knowledge and experience that veterinarians have in working in difficult situations with animals, but everyone is expected to follow the ICS principles in order to work efficiently with multiple disaster response agencies.

In General:

- Veterinarians are contacted and approved by Butte County Animal Control through the ICS system.
- Veterinarians will support the first responders to provide care for the evacuated animals.
- The veterinarian may be asked to assist first responders in the search, field care, evacuation and transport of animals. This will depend on the request for aid from the first responders and the approval within the ICS system. In this case, the veterinarian would likely be on a team with NVADG volunteers familiar with the necessary radios, procedures and paperwork.
- Veterinarians are responsible for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment. Use of prescription drugs may be authorized only by a veterinarian.
 - For fire disasters, the California Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps has standard burn treatment protocols that should be utilized to ensure consistency of care when multiple veterinary personnel are involved.

- Drugs and vaccines should be stored under conditions recommended by the manufacturer. Products should be examined periodically to ensure cleanliness and current expiration date.
 - Controlled substances must be handled in accordance with current state and federal laws regarding storage and documentation.
- Records of individual animal treatments should be kept, including animal identification, date of treatment, name of product administered, name of the individual administering product, and the name of the supervising veterinarian.

Depending on the magnitude of the disaster, request for volunteer veterinarians could expand outside of Butte county. At this point, veterinarians must be licensed in California to practice medicine within the state. However, according to their 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, the California Veterinary Medical Board is working on a board decision to issue temporary licenses to out-of-state veterinarians during disaster responses.

Professional and courteous behavior is expected when working with the numerous volunteers in disaster situations.

Related Documents Attached: n/a

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