Job Aid
Hotline Operator 2026

Name: _____ Date: _____ Event: _____

Use one Job Aid per shift. Document all details in the Tasks (Pending) and Notes Section.

Time Done	
	OVERVIEW
	Hotline Operators are responsible for answering hotline calls from the public during an evacuation. ELEMENTS INCLUDE**:** • Presenting a professional point of contact for the animal response. People can talk to a human to get answers or get information on the correct place to call. • Providing the service for trained volunteers to retrieve their animals, or to shelter the animals in place, and stop the owner from taking the risk of going back into the evacuation zone. • 24-hour staffing during active evacuations.
	POSITION OVERVIEW
	• Responsible for answering calls about animals and generating a Service Request or search in Shelterly. Also answering questions, and directing callers to the correct resource for information. • Hotline Operators capture and enter the information used to retrieve, search and rescue or shelter in place animals, and help match lost animals with their owners. • This requires a professional phone manner, technical-level skills in Shelterly, and attention to details. • Recognize trends and other important information that should be escalated up chain of command.
	REPORTS TO
	Hotline Lead, then Staging Group Supervisor
	FORMS & GUIDES – What you use
	• ICS 214 and if remote, a Remote Sign In Form. • Paper Service Request (SR). For use if internet goes down. Can also be used to capture information during calls prior to entry. • Hotline Call Log. • Hotline Operator Job Aid. An Operator Lead Job Aid is also available. • Shelterly Quick Reference for Creating SRs, Editing SRs, Debrief, Search, Notes Field, Statuses, Species List. • Daily Animal Branch Operations Incident Action Plan (ABO IAP)

TECHNOLOGY – What you need to have

- Shelterly log in and incident access.
- Computer with reliable internet service. Use hotspot if necessary.
- Cell phone, charger, headset. Calls can be received on Landline, but WhatsApp requires a cell phone.
- Advanced Level knowledge of the Shelterly Hotline, Dispatch, Shelter and Search functions.
- WhatsApp downloaded to phone. WhatsApp can also be used on your computer as long as it's open on your phone. You will be included in the Hotline Group, Dispatch Update Group and Shelterly Tech Group

RESOURCES – What can help

- Current information on where public can take donations
- List of phone numbers and addresses

COORDINATE WITH

- Dispatch Team
- Hotline Operators
- Hotline Lead and/or Staging Group Supervisor

ASSIGNMENTS/DUTIES

- Service Requests are for Evacuation Order only. If in warning area, get help from friends and family.
- Owners need to make plans to get their animals out of the emergency shelters on their own. Butte County Animal Control encourages owners to find other accommodations for their animals ASAP.
- Get your phone number "turned on" to have calls forwarded for the Hotline (Grasshopper).
- When you need to be away from call taking, let Lead know to "turn off" your phone number from call forwarding (Grasshopper).
- Keep Lead and Scheduling person aware of your availability.
- If internet or Shelterly failure occurs, the incident will transition to paper. Be ready with printouts of "Shelterly Printed SR Form".
- Document any Shelterly glitches and escalate to Shelterly Tech Lead. Post to WhatsApp if you have created a WhatsApp Shelterly group.
- Stay apprised of status of Shelters and Evacuation.
- Returning for 2025: Hotline operators will get a verbal liability waiver when an owner requests NVADG perform evacuation or Shelter-In-Place. This is a toggle in the Shelterly workflow. Hover over the "I" for the exact language and toggle to the right for "yes".
- Use the Hotline Log to write names and phone numbers of Service Request callers.
- Turn in 214 and Hotline Log daily to Lead.
- If you work remotely, use the Remote Sign In Form to sign in and out. Email to Lead.

	Phone Etiquette and Phrasing • Answer calls "North Valley Animal Disaster Group, this is _____". Please ALWAYS give caller your name. • Keep a calm demeanor. • Do not make promises. Say "We'll do our best." • "I am going to collect some information from you and read it back to you. We are here to help and gather accurate information so we can get your animals what they need." • From owners, get a verbal liability waiver. "I need you to agree to a quick verbal liability release. Evacuating, sheltering, and sheltering-in-place all expose your animal to health and safety risks. Photos of our efforts are occasionally taken. Do you release Butte County Animal Control and North Valley Animal Disaster Group from all liability?" (Toggle the Shelterly button to the right when they agree). • Speak slowly and clearly, repeat information back to the caller. • Show empathy: "I am sorry this is happening to you. We are here to help." • When calling someone back, avoid giving your personal phone number. Pushing #67 before 1, and area code will hide your phone number. Always start your conversation by introducing yourself and asking "How are you doing?" • "I'm sorry, North Valley Animal Disaster Group is not permitted to release information about the status of homes in the evacuation area. The Sheriff is pretty fast about getting that information out – you can try calling their non-emergency number."
	SET UP/START OF INCIDENT

	• Post Addresses or Phone Numbers:
	    o Human Shelters (public use).
	    o Cal Fire Information Line (public use).
	    o Sheriff non-emergency phone number (public use).
	    o Emergency Animal Shelters Addresses (public use).
	    o Emergency Animal Shelters – Phone numbers (NVADG use ONLY).
	    o Other useful information, based on incident.
	    o Refer people in need to 211. They just dial 211.

	THINGS TO CONSIDER
	• Be prepared to verbally transmit special information on special situations to Dispatch. Some situations may not fit in Shelterly. • We will need to get current information regarding any birds that will NOT BE ALLOWED IN SHELTERS. This is due to Avian Flu. They can only be sheltered in place. Hotline Operators need to be aware and advise callers. Put it in the original recorded message, too.

Name: _____   **Phone #:** _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **am / pm**