How to Start a DART

(Disaster Animal Response Team)

A Guide for Massachusetts Communities

http://www.smartma.org/resources/

Table of Contents

I.   Introduction

The best defense for a disaster is a prepared and practiced plan. There are numerous challenges in developing plans for animal evacuation, which can only be solved by creative ideas and innovative programs. In March 2014 MA Senate Bill 1172, "An Act Ensuring the Safety of People with Pets in Disasters," was signed into law. This law (Acts 2014, Chapter 54) requires Massachusetts cities and towns to have a plan in place to address the evacuation and sheltering needs of household pets and service animals before, during, and after an emergency or natural disaster. Plans for sheltering and/or evacuating animals will be most effective when incorporated into a municipality's overall emergency plan.

This manual has been developed to help local municipalities develop & train teams prepared to assist animals in a disaster situation. It is designed to be a resource guide to share information and best practices across the Commonwealth – to help guide public officials; those responsible for emergency management; animal control officers; and members of the public who may wish to volunteer in emergency situations.

Disaster Animal Response Team Goals

- Assist emergency managers and animal control officers with planning for animal issues which may occur before, during, or after an emergency or disaster
- Help create and practice emergency plans for animals, integrated into existing and future all-hazards planning
- Establish and staff pet-friendly shelters, co-located near human shelters
- Assist with establishment and implementation of evacuation procedures which include animals
- Help identify known hazards in the local area which may affect animal populations
- Help identify animal related gaps in local emergency plans and work to mitigate them

DARTs work with local emergency managers and animal control officers as a 'force multiplier'; they are local volunteers trained to support animals in emergency situations, freeing local responders to focus on other issues. This document is a guide to assist volunteers and/or jurisdictions interested in starting a local DART to serve the residents and animals in their community.

II.   What is a Disaster Animal Response Team (DART)?

Disaster Animal Response Teams (DARTs) are local volunteer teams that provide emergency services and support for animals during disasters or emergencies when local emergency assistance is needed and requested. Sometimes they are known as CARTs – Community Animal Response Teams. Animals affected by disaster may include a wide variety of animals, including pets, livestock, strays, and even wildlife. DARTs typically serve local or regional communities where members live and/or work, but DARTs may also be asked to respond to disasters outside of their usual jurisdiction. DARTs provide information, training, support, supplies, and personnel to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disaster situations. DARTs are most effective when they are closely integrated with other emergency resources – such as Medical Reserve Corps (MRC); Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT); American Red Cross (ARC); local animal shelters; and other local, regional, statewide, and/or national disaster response organizations.

The skills and capabilities of DARTs vary based on the needs of the community and the skill sets of the volunteers. For example, a rural community may require a number of DART volunteers with significant livestock

experience, while a DART supporting an urban area may primarily support household pets and perhaps stray or lost animals. Some DARTs may include skilled volunteers qualified to perform specific animal rescue activities, provide veterinary care, and/or assist with stress management for pet owners and/or volunteers. DARTs may also be asked to assist animal control and other organizations with hoarding situations, or wildlife impacted by environmental emergencies such as oil spills. <u>DARTs only deploy when asked by the appropriate lead agency in the jurisdiction.</u>

Massachusetts DARTs

In Massachusetts, DARTs exist in several communities, primarily in Central and Western portions of the state and on Cape Cod. Keep in mind that DARTs may cover a region, rather than a single town. A current list of MA DARTs – and the communities they serve – can be found on the SMART website http://smartma.org/resources/

State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team (SMART)

The State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team (SMART) is a network of organizations, agencies, and individuals committed to responding to the needs of the animal population in disaster situations throughout Massachusetts. The mission of SMART is to be a key resource in Massachusetts by establishing best practices for animal emergency preparedness. Through training and education, SMART assists in the development of DARTs, both locally and regionally, in an effort to strengthen local animal response capabilities throughout the state. SMART is available to provide further guidance and additional resources that you may need.

III. Starting A DART in Your Community

First, you will want to learn if there is a DART in (or serving) your community. Every Massachusetts jurisdiction has an Emergency Management Director (EMD). You can find contact info for your local EMD via your town website or town hall. This information is also available from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) website: https://www.mass.gov/find-your-local-emergency-management-director-emd   Your EMD should know if there is already a DART serving the community. If there is no DART, the EMD may be interested in assistance with forming a group of volunteers prepared to help animals in an emergency.

Additionally, the EMD will know what other volunteer organizations would assist in a local emergency, particularly with emergency sheltering operations. Because organizations responsible for sheltering people should be aware of and work with organizations responsible for sheltering companion animals (pets), it is best to consider the needs of both populations when developing or practicing shelter plans. Co-located pet shelters, for example, are located near human shelters, so that owners can be near their pets and help care for them. This practice has been shown to minimize the staff necessary to care for the animals, reduce stress for the animals and their owners, and lower rates of abandoned animals. More information about co-located shelters can be found in the SMART Shelter Manual: http://smartma.org/resources/

Assessing Needs

If no DART exists in your community, the EMD and Animal Control Officer (ACO) can help you assess the animal population and emergency needs in your community. For example, in an urban area, the primary need may be to shelter pets/companion animals; but rural areas may need significant resources prepared to assist livestock or large animals in an emergency. Contact information for your local ACO should be available from the town's website or police department. Local ACO information is also available from the state website: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/municipal-animal-inspectors-and-animal-control-officers

An animal population assessment can be done using a variety of local resources – including dog license information from the Town Clerk's Office, and livestock census information from the animal inspector, who is often, but not always also the animal control officer. Each town's animal inspector's name and contact information can be found on the state website noted above. Your local veterinarian(s) may even be able to provide some general information about exotic animals in the area.

Another way to estimate the number of pets/companion animals that may need to be sheltered in your community is to ask the EMD about local shelter capacity. The capacity of the pet shelter should be correlated to the capacity of the human shelter, in a ratio of roughly 50 crates to 100 cots.

In an emergency, wildlife issues should be referred to the local ACO, who may in some cases ask for assistance from DART volunteers trained to assist wildlife.

NOTE – service animals are NOT the responsibility of DARTs in an emergency. Service animals should always stay with their humans in the human shelters. However, for a variety of reasons, non-service companion animals will need to be housed separately – in a separate room, building, or location from the shelter provided for the general population. See the SMART Shelter Manual for more information: http://smartma.org/resources/

Keep in mind – local plans to shelter PEOPLE in an emergency already exist. The goal is to expand those sheltering plans to include ANIMALS. There may be a tendency to "go rogue" and set up a separate animal shelter – particularly if you are not communicating closely with the local EMD - but this is NOT the most efficient use of volunteers, space, or resources, and can lead to significant confusion when an emergency occurs.

Finally, MA Senate Bill 1172, "An Act Ensuring the Safety of People with Pets in Disasters," ***requires*** Massachusetts cities and towns to have a plan in place to address the evacuation and sheltering needs of household pets and service animals. When the law is understood, most local EMDs and/or ACOs will be glad for assistance in meeting these requirements.

Identifying Resources

Local resources can be very valuable – both for recruiting skilled DART volunteers, and possibly for acquiring equipment and supplies. Talk to local veterinarians, boarding facilities, doggie daycares, and pet stores. There may also be dog walking businesses, training facilities, or other animal-related businesses or clubs in your area. Don't forget to reach out to local animal shelter facilities to find volunteers passionate about – and skilled in handling – pets and companion animals.

State resources include: SMART, MEMA, and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Also, the SMART Pet Sheltering Manual, available at http://www.smartma.org/resources/ and in the Resources section at the end of this document, is a great tool.

Organizational Considerations

Before you can build a local team to help animals in future disasters, the most important consideration is how to organize your volunteers. There are many complicated financial & legal issues which can make starting and running a DART extremely cumbersome. To avoid this, we strongly recommend you identify active disaster response teams that already exist in your town or region and make an effort to join forces with them.

Affiliations

In 2012, an "animal control" law created some statewide oversight and consistency for animal control in the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. This means that Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are required to have

specific training, including animal disaster response training. Sometimes the lead agency (or agent) will be the town's ACO and s/he will "sponsor" the DART. Or the lead agency could be the police or fire department. Occasionally it is the local animal shelter. It is also possible that the town has already established relationships with volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross (ARC), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), or the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

There is always a "lead agency" in a disaster operation and this agency will ideally follow the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage resources, including various agencies, volunteers, and procedures. In larger scale disasters the lead agency for animal issues may be national or international organizations like the Humane Society of the United States or International Fund for Animal Welfare, for example.

It is necessary, before starting anything locally, to learn about what already exists in your jurisdiction and how the animals will fit into the overall plan. If there is currently no one representing the animals in your town it is important to get the animals into emergency planning activities. In 2014 the Massachusetts PETS Act (An Act Ensuring the Safety of People with Pets in Disasters) was enacted. This law, and a similar federal law passed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, was written to improve public safety. Many studies have been done noting the dangers to both residents and responders when residents do not evacuate because they refuse to leave their pets. Supporting the needs of people with household pets is a public safety issue.

Developing relationships – per the direction of your local EMD – with the lead sheltering organization(s) in your community is a good first step. The EMD will know the lead sheltering organization – which could be ARC, CERT, MRC, etc. It may be beneficial for you to join one of these organizations and (assuming they are willing) create a subgroup to work on animal sheltering.

Mission and Governance

Your DART's "mission" is a statement about why the team exists. Presumably, your mission will include some language about disaster training, preparedness, and response. But your DART may decide to provide more or less in the form of services. Creating a mission statement can be as complicated or simple as your group wants. It is well worth the effort to envision different scenarios and try to determine what your DART's capacity would be in each case. That process will help in the long run to limit your DART's activities to what your volunteers are capable of doing. The Western Massachusetts DART's (WMDART) mission statement is:

> *The mission of WMDART is to assist with the care of domesticated animals that have been displaced by a disaster. We believe that operating a pet shelter concurrent with a shelter for people is the best way to support both the pets and their owners during times of crisis.*

> *WMDART also promotes education, safety and disaster planning to animal owners, city or town government leaders, emergency responders, and other interested parties.*

WMDART is the blanket identifier for the DARTs in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties.

There are many different organizational models for DARTs in Massachusetts. We strongly encourage working with an existing group in your area wherever possible, as this will significantly simplify start up process & legal issues. For example, a DART can be created as part of an existing MRC or CERT organization – recruiting & training volunteers who are focused on animals, working with the other volunteers as a team.

Governance refers to who is running the DART. Any DARTs created as freestanding, nonprofit corporations (as opposed to a branch of an existing organization such as MRC or CERT) need to be recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 and registered with the state of Massachusetts as such. Additionally, freestanding DARTs will be required to have a board of directors. In our state that means there will have to be a president, a clerk, and a treasurer at the very least. You will also be required to submit Articles of Organization and the DART's bylaws

to the state's Attorney General's Office. The most efficient way to get the organization started – assuming you are unable to affiliate with an existing organization – is to borrow these documents from a freestanding DART and fit them to your needs, with the help of a lawyer. **NOTE** – freestanding, non-profit DARTs are frequently difficult to establish and maintain; raising money and meeting various financial and liability requirements often involves far more administrative effort than volunteers are willing to provide.

Finances and Liability

Two of the most important reasons to carefully consider affiliation with an existing organization are financial and legal. Joining with an organization which has already solved these issues will dramatically simplify the startup and ongoing management of the DART.

The structure of your organization will dictate how you organize your finances. Keeping records is of utmost importance. Your treasurer or coordinator should be someone who can balance a checkbook, keep track of receipts, maintain inventory records, create income and expenses statements, and file forms with the IRS and the state, as needed. If that paperwork is in order it should be relatively simple to produce what a granting organization or an individual donor might want to know before deciding to provide funds to the DART. Many MRC and CERT organizations have already set up these financial controls.

Although volunteers in an emergency are theoretically covered under various 'good Samaritan' laws, SMART carries liability coverage, which is available to protect volunteers in DARTs which have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SMART. See the sample MOU in the Resources section at the end of this document, or at: http://wmdart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SMART-DART.pdf

IV. Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers directly after a disaster seems to be a good time to catch people when their awareness is at a high level. Volunteers who will be working directly with animals should have some knowledge of animal behavior and animal handling skills and experience. They should also understand how stress can affect an animal in an unfamiliar environment. If you have a local animal shelter this would be the best place to start to see if you can partner with the shelter; you may also want a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to outline your relationship in the event of a disaster involving companion animals. You might also reach out to your local animal businesses, animal rescue organizations, and veterinary hospital(s) to recruit veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and animal care specialists. Your local ACO may know of local organizations which may be good places to recruit volunteers who already know how to work with a variety of animals. You will also need "laypeople" to help with administrative activities such as checking in animals, uploading supplies, categorizing items, and more. These may be people who have and/or like animals, but don't have specific training regarding working with animals. Keep in mind, pets at a shelter are likely to be very stressed, so volunteers who are trained to work with stressed animals will be in great demand!

It's best to start with an informational meeting to explain the role of DARTs and how emergency sheltering works in your community. The PETS Act (both federal and local) would be a good place to start. As you plan the meeting, be careful to not step on toes; be sure to work with the EMD and/or ACO, and ask if s/he wants to invite other town officials. Make sure to have a tight agenda for the meeting, and have a list of next steps by the end of the meeting with assignments and due dates for tasks. This will keep the ball rolling. And be sure to serve food!

Qualifications, Credentialing & Identification of Volunteers

One of the most important steps in the process of starting a DART is pre-credentialing. This planning step ensures that volunteers are trained and ready to deploy in the event of an emergency. DART volunteers will interact with the public, including people of all ages & backgrounds, and work alongside shelter staff & clients.

All active DART volunteers should be issued photo ID's with their name, noting current animal and/or medical licenses, and identify them as part of the DART (or overarching organization). Volunteers who are not pre-credentialed and issued badges will **not** be admitted to shelter locations in an emergency – so it is important to do these things in advance. Again, MRCs & CERTs all have pre-credentialing policies & processes, making this step much simpler.

Credentialing includes the following:
- **CORI / SORI checks** – your EMD will be able to let you know the appropriate process to check Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) & Sex Offender (SORI) registries in your jurisdiction. All volunteers must pass these checks before being deployed.
- **Professional license checks** – the MA Board of Registration in Veterinary Medicine makes license information available online: https://elicensing.state.ma.us/CitizenAccess/_SearchaLicense.htm
- **Identification badges** – your local MRC or CERT will have a process for issuing ID badges; many police departments or other local agencies may also have badging machines you may be able to use.

Maintain Volunteer Database

Recent experience with large-scale disasters and other events has consistently shown that an effective response requires that volunteers be pre-credentialed and deployed through a coordinated effort. SMART and many DART teams have recognized that a statewide system of volunteer registration, such as MA Responds, will improve data management and volunteer coordination.

If your DART is a sub-group of an existing CERT or MRC, they likely already have a preferred database of volunteer information. If not, the MA Responds system: https://www.maresponds.org/ is available via SMART; this system also includes a process for CORI and licensing checks.

Whatever database you use for your volunteers, ensure you have current contact information, including home, work, and mobile phone numbers, various emails, and at least one in case of emergency contact who is NOT also a member of your DART. You will need to reach people quickly in case of an emergency. A database which allows you to print volunteer information (2-4 times each year is recommended) is important, in case the system is not available in an emergency.

Volunteer Communications

You will need several ways to communicate with your volunteers. Ongoing communications involve information regarding non-emergency activities such as trainings, meetings, and updates. Email lists are useful, and social media may also be a good idea. If you have volunteers who are interested in setting them up, a website or Facebook page can be useful tools. Various applications are available: Groupme is an app which allows group text messaging; volunteers can be subdivided into relevant workgroups.

In an emergency, you will need to reach people very quickly. Discuss with your local EMD what tools are available for emergency communications. Participate in regular communication drills to iron out issues before a real emergency situation. You may want to partner with local HAM radio groups in case the usual communication methods (phone, text, email) aren't working in an emergency.

V. Preparing the Team

Training

Training is a very important part of both emergency preparedness and teambuilding. Through training, volunteers will get to know each other, and become familiar with the basic skills necessary to work with other organizations in a real emergency. Some training – including ICS 100 and NIMS 700 – are federally required for all emergency volunteers. Recommended trainings will help ensure that your team is well prepared to work together with other organizations – and the public – in a chaotic and volatile emergency situation.

In order to protect people and their animals from harm (and DART volunteers and communities from liability), only trained personnel should be tasked with animal response: within the scope of their expertise and available equipment. Copies of all completed training course certificates must be provided to the DART leader, and noted in the volunteer database. DART volunteers should participate in formal and informal animal disaster drills, shelter management simulation exercises, cross-training opportunities with other state and local teams, communications and other equipment training, animal handling, hands-on training, and attend regular meetings whenever possible.

Required Training – FEMA ICS / NIMS

1. FEMA IS – 100.b Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS-100:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.b
2. FEMA IS – 700.a National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Intro:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.a

Recommended Training – FEMA

1. FEMA IS – 10.a Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-10.a
2. FEMA IS – 11.a Animals in Disasters: Community Planning:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-11.a
3. FEMA IS – 111.a Livestock in Disasters:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-111.a
4. FEMA IS – 200.b ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents:
   https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.b

Additional Courses to Consider

1. Psychological First Aid – available through the American Red Cross and/or Medical Reserve Corps
2. American Red Cross (ARC) training: http://redcross.org/where/chapts.asp
   - Pet and Human First Aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation
   - Introduction to Disaster Services
   - Mass Care
   - Shelter Operations
3. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainings: http://www.citizencorps.gov/
   CERT Animal Response Module I+II   NOTE - if CERT classes are not available locally, these modules can be studied online: https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/27983

4. FEMA IS – 3 Radiological Emergency Management

5. FEMA IS – 5.a An Introduction to Hazardous Materials

6. FEMA IS – 800.b National Response Framework, An Introduction

7. Other national organizations offering disaster training:

- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: www.ASPCA.org
- Humane Society: http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/humane-societyacademy/?credit=web_vanity_academy
- RedRover: www.RedRover.org
- American Humane: www.AmericanHumane.org
- National Alliance of State Agricultural & Animal Emergency Programs: www.NASAAEP.org

Activation / Deployment Basics

During a disaster, the DART is a response organization. The DART will ONLY respond when requested by an authorized entity: e.g. local Emergency Management Director, MEMA, etc. The DART and individual volunteers should NEVER self-deploy.

There are two types of incidents 1) No-Notice and 2) Advanced Notice. Both types may be natural or man-made. Examples of a no-notice incident include earthquakes, tornadoes, and terrorist attacks. Examples of an advanced notice incident include hurricanes, winter storms, etc.

Advanced Notice Incident

48 to 72 hours before a potential incident

- The Director or their designee may put the DART on standby based upon information available.
- DART volunteers should review the contents of their go-kit and their availability to deploy.
- The Equipment Team should review the contents of the trailer and make any adjustments as needed.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- Director or their designee should contact local agencies to see if they are plan on opening a shelter.   Local agencies include local EMD and/or local Red Cross chapter.

24 to 48 hours before a potential incident – ONLY upon request from a local authorized entity

- If location of shelter is known, pre-positioning the equipment trailer may be desirable.
- Tour shelter facility if possible.
- The Director or their designee should develop a preliminary staffing schedule based upon availability of team members and expected opening of shelter. The staffing schedule shall be distributed to team members.
- If available staff is insufficient to safely and effectively open the shelter, the Director or their designee shall notify the requesting local entity of their inability to respond.
- Maintain situational awareness.

0 to 24 hours before a potential incident

- The Director or their designee shall maintain contact with the local requesting entity regarding the availability of shelter facility, and opening times.
- The Director or their designee shall confirm setup and shelter opening time with shelter staff and their continued availability. Make adjustments as necessary.

- If not previously staged, equipment trailer shall be delivered to the shelter facility.
- Shelter setup should begin a minimum of two (2) hours prior to shelter opening.
- Coordinate efforts with the Human Shelter Manager and the local requesting entity.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- Contact mutual aid partners and notify them of the DART's deployment.

No-Notice Incident

All the steps listed above will take place for a no-notice event except the timeframe will be condensed.

Upon request from a local authorized entity (EMD; lead sheltering agency; etc)

- Verify location of shelter
- Verify if entry routes to shelter are clear and safe to travel. If not, find alternate routes, if possible.
- Immediately notify Team of deployment and check on availability.
- Upon determining that there are sufficient personnel to safely open and operate the shelter, notify the local requesting entity of your estimated time of arrival.
- Upon arrival at shelter, coordinate setup with Facility Manager and coordinate work with Human Shelter Manager and local requesting entity.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- Contact mutual aid partners and notify them of the Team's deployment.
- Develop staffing plan for future incident action periods.

Volunteer Safety & Security

The health and safety of shelter workers is the top priority. Only volunteers with proper training and experience with the restraint and handling of animals should have direct contact with the pets. It is the responsibility of the Shelter Group Supervisor to designate a Safety Officer as soon as a team arrives on site. This should be coordinated with the ICS Commander. Additionally, safety of the animals and their owners within the shelter must be addressed carefully.   *NOTE*: Additional DART positions are noted in the SMART Pet Sheltering Manual available at http://www.smartma.org/resources/ and in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Safety Officer Duties

These are a guide for the Safety Officer and Shelter Group Supervisor and can be divided up as needed. When possible the procedures listed below should all be reviewed and in place BEFORE an emergency occurs.

- Establishing a site evacuation signal, route and meeting place in the event of smoke, fire, lightning, high winds or other life threatening situations. Identify fire alarms and extinguishers.
- Identify route to local human medical facilities and modes of transportation (ambulance, POV)
- Establishing a loose animal signal and response protocol.
- Review evacuation and loose animal protocol, weather and health safety concerns at daily briefings or shift changes as situation requires. Stress importance of daily sign in and sign out for team members.
- Making sure emergency protocols including dog bite or cat bite protocols are in place.
- Review safe animal handling, bite and scratch prevention, rabies awareness, and other zoonotic concerns.

9

- Identify and flag slip trip and fall hazards. Review handling and disposal of sharps, chemicals, infectious material as well as contaminated of disposal of waste and water.

- Maintain awareness of changing weather hazards and alert team members in the first briefing, and again as needed.

- Institute personnel buddy system and reporting in schedule as needed.

- Review hand, head, skin, hearing, eye, and respiratory protection

- Review and stress proper and frequent hand washing after removal of personal protective equipment (PPE), before eating or touching eyes.

- Remind all team members that any injury or animal bite must be reported to the Safety Officer and an injury report is to be filled out.

- If shelter team members are housed in same building as the Red Cross Shelter, report the number of shelter team members in facility overnight to Red Cross Shelter Supervisor, as well as a designated location where the shelter team will assemble in the event of a building evacuation.

General Safety

Consider the following when setting up training programs for your volunteers. Your procedures should be reviewed and in place BEFORE an emergency and deployment occur:

- Training all workers in sanitation, prevention of wounds from animals and to animals

- Risk assessment and management

- Person in charge to evaluate and manage safety issues – Safety Officer

- See the SMART Pet Sheltering Manual for details: http://smartma.org/resources/

- Identification, assessment, and control of health and safety hazards

- Define the common expected hazards and have procedures to deal with them

- Sanitation issues: feces, urine, blood, waste containment and disposal

- Develop a generic health and safety plan

- Volunteer/worker exposure risks

- Blood borne pathogens

- Bites, scratches, falls, trip hazards, etc.

- State laws re: reporting

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) program development and implementation (gloves, masks, gowns, etc.)

- Incident-specific worker safety and health training

- Who makes the determinations, who implements procedures?

- Communication of safety and health information to workers and employers

- Pre-incident training

- During incident communications and implementations

- Post-incident review

Animal Bite Protocol

The MA rabies vaccination and quarantine protocols and regulations for animal bites are available online:
https://www.mass.gov/service-details/rabies-protocols-and-regulations

- Animal bites must be reported to the Safety Officer on duty immediately. All exposures by dogs, cats and domestic animals must be reported to the local health department and Animal Control Officer or the animal inspector for the town where the animal will be quarantined. The Safety Officer will notify the Shelter Group Supervisor and Shelter Manager as needed.

- **Initiate proper wound care by washing well with soap and water immediately**. Direct the person bitten to a first aid facility, hospital, or their choice of physician with any known information about the owner of the animal and the status of the animal's rabies vaccination.

- Massachusetts law requires all dogs and cats that bite humans must be quarantined for 10 days. The local Animal Control Officer will determine the location and enforcement of the quarantine. Highlight the vaccination status of the animal on the cage card. Until directed otherwise by Animal Control the animal should be placed in an isolation area without direct contact with people or other animals. The animal must remain under observation for 10 full days. Any illness noted in the animal during the 10 days must be reported to Animal Control and a veterinarian and attending physician immediately. If there is no vaccination history, the animal should NOT be vaccinated until after the 10 day observation period.

- Other options, such as euthanasia or release to owner, must follow the protocol established by the state of MA Department of Public Health.

- A bite report should be completed that contains the following information:
  - Name and address of pet owner
  - Contact number(s)
  - Name and address of person with bite wound
  - Contact number(s)
  - Location of bite on body
  - Rabies immunization status of the human and the pet
  - Date of bite
  - Time of bite
  - Circumstances under which the bite occurred; was the exposure provoked?
  - Cage/Kennel #
  - Name of animal
  - Unique ID #
  - Breed/Age
  - Quarantine Location
  - Date quarantine starts
  - Date quarantine ends

- Fill out an Accident Report Form – there is one in the appendix of the SMART Shelter Manual. It will incorporate most of the above information. Add additional information to the form where space is available or on a second sheet of paper.

Disaster Behavioral Health

When DART volunteers run an emergency animal shelter, they are in a position to help people who have experienced an extremely distressing event. Obviously people get very emotional about their animals. Volunteers should be taught the core actions of psychological first aid such as providing physical and emotional comfort, identifying immediate needs and concerns, and helping to calm pet owners in a non-intrusive and compassionate manor. Some individuals may need other sources of support and it's useful to be able to make those connections. No one is immune to disaster related stress and the core actions of disaster behavioral health are a good way to support fellow DART volunteers.

Volunteer Supplies & Equipment

Sample Volunteer Personal Go Bag   (Weather, location, duties, and duration dependent)

On Your Person:		Back Pack:
DART ID, Driver's License, Cell Phone		Medications: Prescription and Non-Prescript.
Watch		Contact lenses/glasses
Critical Medications / Allergy Alert bracelet		Sun block
Money/Credit cards		Chapstick
Pocket notebook/Pens/Sharpie		Hand wipes
Cell Phone charger and back up battery source		Band-Aids: Fabric type, Moleskin
Main Bag:		Matches, Waterproof.
Hat		Water Purification tabs
Underwear		Sunglasses
Socks and sock liners		Hearing and Eye Protection/safety glasses
Belt		Insect repellent: (3M Ultrathon)
Boots		Rations/Food: at least 2 MRE's , Hikers meals
Work Pants		Flashlight: reliable and water tight)
Work Shirts		Batteries: (no "Heavy Duty" they last ½)
Shower shoes (Flip-flops / Tevas)		Plastic Mug and Spoon
Sleepwear (scrubs, shorts, t-shirt)		Rope: 50 ft. ("550 Para cord" multi use)
Tennis Shoes		Camera
Sweatshirt		Reading material
Comb/brush		Playing cards/travel games
Towel		Duct Tape/gaffers tape:
Small Mirror: (unbreakable travel type)		Garbage Bags(3, Large, 45-55 gallon type)
Meds: Prescription and Non prescription		Zip lock Bags
Spare Glasses in hard case		Fire: (Lighter, Waterproof Matches)
Spare Contact Lenses and solution		Knife: (Folding pocket type)
Toothbrush, Toothpaste		Leatherman type tool (optional)
Razor w/ blades		Strip plug (optional) (Wal-Mart $5 or less)
Shave cream		Headlamp x 2 and spare batteries
Soap		Toilet Paper/paper towels
Shampoo		Work Gloves
Deodorant: (unscented)		Medications: Prescription and Non-Prescript.
Floss		Rain Jacket and Pants
Foot powder		Water
Water: 2 quarts /person/day		
Cold Weather Clothing:		
Gloves, Hat synthetic fleece or wool		**Sleep Gear:**
Jacket, synthetic fleece		Mattress Pad, Foam or Air
Pants, synthetic fleece		Sleeping bag
Parka, Polarguard (NOT DOWN)		Compression Bag
Thermal underwear, synthetic		Pillow
Winter synthetic socks		

Drills & Exercises

Drills & exercises are an important aspect to team building and testing and should be done on a regular basis.

Drills are used to train the team or individual members on how to perform a task e.g. setting up a shelter, learning a registration system, etc. and then having them practice the task to gain proficiency. They are more frequent then exercises and can be easily customized to the training and skill level of the individuals. Drills also allow senior team members to build confidence as trainers and leaders as they work with junior members.

Exercises come in three variations: tabletop (TTX), functional, and full, and are meant to be done in sequence. All are scenario based with stated goals and objectives with the purpose being to test one or more sections to an existing operational or response plan.

A TTX is just that, around a tabletop. No equipment is involved but you and the team work to form a solution given the scenario and the timeframe. A functional exercise adds a little bit more realism to the scenario such as doing a walk-through of an actual shelter to determine how you would set it up. A full-scale exercise is more intensive because you bring the actual equipment to be used. In a shelter setup exercise, you would actually setup the shelter as if it were an actual incident. This could include all stations or just one.

An important part of exercises is to have outside evaluators available, so they can provide an impartial review of the actions taken and/or not taken. These reviews form the basis of an improvement plan which may be varied in its recommendations. These recommendations may involve equipment, training, policy, procedures, etc. with the purpose of improving the team's qualifications, skill, and efficiency.

Volunteer Engagement & Retention

One of the biggest challenges is volunteer retention. After the flurry of activity post-disaster, volunteers can lose interest and start seeking other volunteer opportunities related to other disaster-related events across the country. In order to keep people's interest it is best to offer frequent exercises and trainings. Exercises can be on paper or be in the form of a full-fledged mock drill with real humans and their pets, cages, a registration table, a medical area, etc. After action assessments help the team to determine what might have been more efficient, what might have been a better way to process the animals.

Many DART teams position themselves as the local community resource for preparedness information about animals. This helps keep volunteers engaged, and helps pet owners prepare to care for their animals during a disaster. This activity can also serve as a recruitment function.

VI. Community Outreach and Preparedness

One of the best ways to retain volunteers is to involve them in community preparedness activities. These activities are critical to make sure that everyone in your community is aware that they should always bring their pets with them in case of emergency, and that their pets will be welcome & cared for if they need to go to a shelter.

Some examples of opportunities to increase awareness in your community regarding pet preparedness include:

Community events	Dog shows
Talks on mitigation and preparedness	Shelter in place instructions for large animals
Local Cable Access station	Rabies clinics and/or dog licensing
Farmers Markets	Dog parks
Library talks	4-H club

VII. Authority

A.   Federal - PETS Act of 2006

https://www.congress.gov/109/plaws/publ308/PLAW-109publ308.pdf

B.   Massachusetts – Safety of People with Pets in Disasters law 2014

https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2014/Chapter54

C.   2012 Act Further Regulating Animal Control

https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter193

VIII. Other Resources

A.   SMART Pet Sheltering Manual

http://smartma.org/resources/

B.   SMART/DART Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

http://wmdart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SMART-DART.pdf

C.   MA Rabies Protocols and Regulations

https://www.mass.gov/service-details/rabies-protocols-and-regulations