



Colorado Veterinary
Medical Foundation



For Immediate Release

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What does the PETS Act of 2006 mean to Colorado?

On October 6th, 2006, the President signed into law the Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 or PETS Act. This law amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to mandate that state and local emergency plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals. (Service animals are pets that assist people with disabilities through sight, hearing, emotional support and mobility assistance.) The PETS Act followed a year after the devastating 2005 hurricane season that resulted in catastrophic damages along the US Gulf Coast. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrated clearly that the safety of people and animals are closely connected and that local and state emergency plans protect people by helping to protect animals. Thousands of people and their animals were displaced and endangered with many lives lost (both human and animal) and thousands of pets permanently separated from their owners in the ensuing confusion.

The PETS Act has three main impacts:

1. Requires state and local emergency plans to include provisions for people with household pets and service animals and allows the federal government to withhold grant funding for non-compliance.
2. FEMA is directed to include expenses related to companion animals under their cost-sharing programs with states and local communities during major disasters (FEMA generally provides 75% of specific state and local disaster expenditures during Presidential disaster declarations.)
3. The PETS Act allows FEMA to provide funding to help develop state and local capabilities, but does not provide specific funds designated for that purpose.

What does our state and our local communities need to do to comply with the PETS Act?

Luckily in Colorado, we had already started a serious statewide effort to address these issues well before the 2005 hurricanes. State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and many counties are working collaboratively on these issues aided by the Colorado State Animal Response Team (COSART) program, a government-private partnership developed as a program of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation. In 2004, COSART and its supporting partners provided training throughout Colorado to help communities begin to develop animal emergency plans and to help establish County Animal Response Team (CART) programs throughout Colorado. During the 2005 hurricanes, COSART helped

organize Colorado's animal response both in our state and on the Gulf Coast. In addition, COSART is working with state agencies to finalize a section of the CO emergency plan that will address animal issues.

There remains a great deal of work, however, before Colorado is compliant with the PETS Act. Each county in our state must develop animal components for their emergency plans and we must create the capacity to realistically support both local and state plans during emergencies. Response needs include animal evacuation, transportation, sheltering, veterinary care and more. These efforts will take resource commitments from our state, local communities and donations in support of the CO SART program from individuals and the private sector.

Finally, each family must include their pets and livestock in their own household emergency plan. You can learn more about the PETS Act, building family emergency plans that include animals, and the Colorado State Animal Response Team program at www.COSART.org.

The Colorado State Animal Response Team program serves to build statewide animal and animal-agricultural emergency capacity through prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts in partnership with state agencies and other non-governmental partners.

The Colorado SART Steering Committee includes:

- The Colorado Division of Emergency Management
- The Colorado Department of Agriculture
- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado State University
- The Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
- The Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies
- Colorado Citizen Corps
- With liaisons to the Colorado Livestock Association and USDA

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Checklist for families with pets and livestock

General considerations:

- Create a family plan and make sure everyone understands the plan. Visit www.ReadyColorado.com for more information
- Plan where you will go with your pets or livestock if you have to evacuate
- Plan how will you care for your pets and livestock
- www.Petswelcome.com provides information on over 25,000 hotels and motels that accept pets
- A family plan template that includes pets and livestock can be found at: www.ColoradoSART.org

Post information for emergency personnel on your property:

- Emergency contact information (daytime phone, other emergency contacts)
- Number of pets (and basic description)
- Number of livestock (and basic description)
- Location of animal emergency supplies
- Permission to evacuate your animals in time of emergency, if desired

Evacuation supplies for pets:

- Pet carriers/airline kennels (typically one per pet; pillow cases can be used for safely transporting cats in an emergency)
- Collars (with tags), leashes, cat harnesses
- Bowls, blankets, paper towels, spray cleaner, trash bags
- Pet food, litter box, cat litter
- Pet photos, pet health records, microchip records, prescription medications
- Treats, toys and miscellaneous pet supplies

Evacuation supplies for livestock:

- Halters and lead ropes
- Registration, brand inspection papers, photos and medical records
- Medications, first aid kit
- Saddles, pads, bridles, hoof pick, hoof knives, rasp, brushes, rope, lunge line
- Water buckets, grain pans, hay and grain as needed for 1-2 weeks
- Water containers** (you will need 5-10 gallons minimum per horse per day)

Shelter in place checklist, general and for pets and livestock:

- Water!
- Flashlights/lantern, extra batteries/fuel
- Non-perishable food reserves for at least 1 week (including pet food)
- Prescription medications for people and pets (1 week minimum)
- Keep cars/trucks at least 50% full of gas whenever possible; ensure gas tanks are full before major storms
- A battery operated air pump with extra batteries for aquariums
- Snow shovel, snow shoes, and winter gear (boots, coats, coveralls, gloves, etc.)
- Camp stove and 2 or more gallons Coleman fuel for melting water for livestock, or a generator and fuel to power a well
- Maintain 1-2 weeks supply of livestock feed (especially hay) at all times