



Animal Care Tech Note

Quick Reference: Contingency Plans for Emergencies

As a dealer, exhibitor, research facility, intermediate handler, animal transporter, or other entity regulated under the Animal Welfare Act, you are required to make a contingency plan. This plan describes what you will do to safeguard your animals during emergencies or disasters. As you develop your contingency plan, refer to the information below for a brief overview of what to consider.

Contingency Plan Basics

- Your plan should address your facility's unique needs; there is no one-size-fits-all contingency plan.
- Your plan should cover all animals in all of your facilities.
- Transporters and intermediate handlers must also develop a contingency plan.
- Your employees should be trained to carry out your facility's contingency plan.
- You must review your plan and document any updates at least annually.

What To Consider

Your contingency plan must address four things: **when** you will activate your plan, **what** actions you will take, **who** is responsible for taking those actions, and **how** you will accomplish them.

When Will You Activate Your Plan?

Emergencies are not limited to natural disasters (like wildfires or hurricanes) and animal escapes. They can also include local events such as a fire, power outage, loss of key personnel, or other unexpected situations that interrupt normal animal care activities. Carefully consider and document the types of emergencies that could affect your area or facility.

What Actions Will You Take?

Your contingency plan must document the actions you'll take in response to the emergency situations that affect your operation. For example, you may need to evacuate your animals and employees, or you may decide that sheltering in place is safest.

Who Will Be Responsible for Taking Specific Actions?

In an emergency, it's critical that you and your staff know your roles and responsibilities. By assigning tasks to staff as



part of the contingency planning process and establishing clear authority and lines of communication, you can streamline your response during an emergency. Remember to update staff responsibilities, assignments, and contact information regularly.

How Will You Carry Out Your Plan?

As you develop your contingency plan, consider what material and equipment you will need, how you will obtain it, and what training is required. If you plan to house animals at another facility during an emergency, make sure the facility is willing and able to receive your animals.

Resources

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has an [optional form](#) that you can download and use when developing and documenting your contingency plan. Go to www.aphis.usda.gov and search "APHIS Form 7093." APHIS' Animal Care inspectors are also available to help you develop or review plans, as needed.

For More Information

You can find information about contingency planning in the following sections of the Animal Welfare Act (9 CFR Part 2): [Subpart C, § 2.38\(i\)\(4\)](#); [Subpart H, § 2.102\(a\)\(4\) and \(b\)\(3\)](#); and [Subpart I, § 2.134](#). Go to ecfr.gov and search "9 CFR 2." For information on the contingency planning rule, go to www.aphis.usda.gov and search "contingency planning rule."

To contact APHIS' Animal Care program, call (970) 494-7478 or email animalcare@usda.gov.