

Douglas County  
Animal  
Annex



**An Annex of the Douglas County**

**Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**

**2022**

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

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**Schedule for Review**

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management will complete a comprehensive review of this plan every two (2) years or more frequently if significant changes occur in demographics, agency staffing or organization, or other areas of improvement are identified following major incidents or exercises.

**Record of Changes**

When Changes are made to this plan, the following procedures will be followed:

- 1. Changes will be issued by the Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (DCOEM) and transmitted to agencies, personnel, and other designees specified by the DCOEM Director.
- 2. When a change is made, an entry will be made on the following log.

<b>Change Number</b>	<b>Date Entered</b>	<b>Pages or Section Changes</b>	<b>Entered by</b>

**I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW**

It is the responsibility of local government to protect the lives and property of its local citizens (C.R.S. 214-33.5-707). Companion animals and non-commercial backyard livestock are often considered by many families and individuals to be

their highest property priority. There is a likelihood that each year Douglas County may encounter several emergency or disaster incidents that involve companion animals and non-commercial backyard livestock.

The Animal Annex describes the necessary steps the County will take to prepare and respond to the needs of animal owning citizens during a large-scale emergency or disaster incident. It describes the actions taken by the County's agencies and departments that have been assigned emergency support function roles in the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This annex is meant to be a guide, in that it allows the County to adjust its response based upon the size and scope of the incident.

#### ANNEX ACTIVATION AND TERMINATION

The Animal Annex may be activated by the Director of the Office of Emergency Management or his/her designee, as required, upon identification of an active or imminent emergency incident that may require, support, coordination, resources, and consequence management.

A disaster through its nature or severity may automatically initiate activation of this Annex. Activation may be in support of a county level emergency, a local jurisdiction or municipal EOC, in support of the State Emergency Operations Center, or any other incident/mission requiring resource support from Douglas County.

- OEM will serve as the lead agency in the development and supervision of the Douglas County Animal Response Team (DCART) program. The DCART Coordinator serves as the primary contact for the CART network resources.
- The CART is comprised of 3 primary teams: Denver Dumb Friends League, Douglas Elbert County Horse Council, Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region. Other regional teams may be activated dependent upon need, scope and length of disaster event.
- For incidents requiring sheltering, the Denver Dumb Friends League (DDFL) will be activated to manage sheltering for companion animals. The Douglas-Elbert County Horse Council (DECHC) will be activated to manage sheltering for non-commercial backyard livestock.
- For incidents requiring the transportation of animals and Search & Rescue components during an evacuation, animal rescue and animal sheltering in place, the DCSO Animal Control Unit (HSPPR) will be alerted and will coordinate with DCSO Patrol Division. The DCSO Patrol Division will determine if it is safe to conduct such missions.
- Veterinary Support will be provided as needed by the requesting team and would be requested through the EOC ESF 6a Desk.

- Once activated, the DCART Coordinator is duly authorized to manage and coordinate the animal response during a disaster incident. This includes call-out and coordination of the animal support teams for animal sheltering, evacuation, search and rescue, veterinary care, and decontamination.

## **II. PURPOSE & SCOPE**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this annex is to provide an ongoing, coordinated framework for the prevention, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts as they relate to management of companion, service and non-commercial backyard livestock during a disaster event.

The Animal Emergency Response annex will be activated when an emergency dictates the evacuation of residents and visitors and their animals. This annex addresses the response and coordination of animal rescue due to natural or technological emergencies such as a wildland fire or a hazardous materials incident.

Emergency Incidents with an animal evacuation component can be a challenge for first responders, citizens, and their animals. Communicating the importance of pet owners to prepare for emergencies will aid significantly when the evacuation of animals becomes necessary. This annex supplements the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

### **SCOPE**

The Animal Annex supports the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This Annex covers all unincorporated areas of Douglas County as well as incorporated cities and towns. It addresses all large-scale emergency or disaster scenarios that may impact Douglas County. The annex outlines details associated with animal disaster planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. It includes descriptions of the hazards and threats the County is susceptible to and the actions the County will take in the event of a disaster event or incident. It also identifies the roles, responsibilities, and coordination lines for animal disaster response.

## **III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

### **SITUATION**

A disaster or large-scale emergency situation can result from a natural or human-caused occurrence resulting in the loss of life or property. During such a situation, it is the responsibility of local government to protect the lives and the property, to

include household pets, companion animals and companion livestock, of its citizens. Efforts to support animal response are coordinated through the Incident Command and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Douglas county is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, all of which have the potential for disrupting communities, causing damage, and producing casualties. Primary concerns are, but are not limited to, wildland fire, winter storms, severe weather, hazardous materials, flooding, active shooter events and acts of terrorism.

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#### ASSUMPTIONS

- Prioritized concerns for emergency management include life safety for people and their service animals; protection of property (which includes companion animals and non-commercial backyard livestock); and protection of the environment.
- Service animals are considered an extension of their owner and will be accommodated with their owner in the disaster shelter American's Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Companion animals and non-commercial backyard livestock are often considered by many families and individuals to be their highest property priority.
- Animal evacuations will occur if the DCSO deems conditions for animal rescue to be safe and appropriate, and there is a known rate of spread that provides enough time for animal rescue responders to enter the threatened area, rescue and evacuate the animals and themselves safely.
- While many owners of animals will take reasonable steps to evacuate, shelter, and provide for their animals, others cannot or will not take adequate actions. In some cases, the protection of their animals is challenged by limitations to their access & functional need. This would include those with mobility and transportation needs, the elderly, the number of animals in their possession, language, and/or cultural barriers.
- Failure to evacuate may both endanger citizens who attempt to rescue their animals and the emergency responders who attempt to protect those citizens.
- Some state agencies such as the Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife or the Colorado Department of Agriculture may have certain statutory responsibilities. Local emergency annexes are designed in cooperation with these agencies.
- Douglas County is a traditionally rural area with livestock making up a large component of the animal population housed in the area. Additional populations include equids (horses, ponies, mules, and donkeys), camelids (llamas, alpacas, and vicunas), poultry, and non-commercial backyard livestock, including 4H projects (beef, swine, rabbit, etc.).

- Commercial livestock is not included in this Animal Annex. If a disaster is declared, commercial livestock owners may receive governmental assistance or insurance reimbursement for loss during an emergency incident, but are ultimately responsible for their herds including evacuation, transportation and sheltering.

#### **IV. AUTHORITIES**

This document is an Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) (R-016-096) as part of the Douglas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan or CEMP (C.R.S. 24-33.5-707(8)).

Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, 24-32-21 creates the Colorado Division of Emergency Management and 24-32-2107 charges each political subdivision with creation of a local emergency management agency.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Industry has statutory authority related to animal health (State Veterinarian 35-50), in the prevention of animal cruelty and neglect (Colorado Bureau of Animal Protection, 35-42), the regulation of companion animal industry (Pet Animal Care Facilities Act, 35-80) and the supervision of branded livestock identification, movement and ownership issues (Colorado Brand Board, 35-41).

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (multiple sections under Title 25, CRS) has authorities related to public health that will intersect with animal health and local jurisdictional public health authorities.

For purposes of this section, an “emergency” is defined as:

- Any emergency formally declared by Douglas County, the State of Colorado, or the Federal Government, including wildland fire, and other disaster situations, in which a person’s life is placed at risk.
- Wildland fire events and other acts of God which place a person’s life at risk.

#### **V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The Douglas County Animal Response Team (DCART) is a network of animal non-governmental organizations and governmental agencies with the mission to manage, assist and support Douglas County in addressing animal issues during emergencies. The CART Coordinator is the lead organizer for animal resources deployment. The CART Coordinator will assist with the following:

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- Preparedness through Community Outreach & Training
- Participation during Exercises & Live Incidents
- Recommending necessary Equipment and Supplies needed for the Douglas CART Trailer
- Response, including assistance with animal evacuation, sheltering, decontamination, search and rescue, and carcass removal
- Recovery

**Command and Management:**

- The activation and deployment of any resources will follow the Incident Command System (ICS) structure.
- Emergency animal response and resources will be coordinated through the CART Coordinator, assigned to the DC EOC or located virtually during an incident.
- ***Self-deployment of unauthorized resources is not allowed under any circumstances.***

**Communications:**

- Telephone, Internet, or direct communications with CART support groups (animal sheltering, search & rescue, etc.) and other agencies/teams will be coordinated through the CART Coordinator. This includes radios for the teams/volunteers to use in the field and at shelters.
- DCART-affiliated organizations and volunteers will maintain appropriate contact with the Emergency Support Functions Mass Care (ESF 6/6a) in the EOC if and when these positions are established. Until ESF 6/6a is activated in the EOC, the Logistics Branch in the EOC is the contact for coordination purposes.

**Public Information and Alert & Warning Pertaining to Animal Issues:**

- All incident information will be communicated to the public through the Public Information Officer in coordination with Incident Command and the DCEOC. Once an incident expands beyond normal resource capabilities, the Joint Information Center (JIC) will be established and tasked with this responsibility.
- Individual organizations may communicate organizational information to the public directly (contact, mission, etc.), however, information concerning public instructions, incident updates and public resource requests must be managed through the PIO/JIC.
- Communication distribution will include the Douglas County Website, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office website, traditional television and radio media, and social media (primarily Twitter).



- Messaging discouraging spontaneous animal emergency response agencies and volunteers will be disseminated as early as is practical.

**Animal-related Donations Management during a Disaster:**

- If donations are needed for animal support, monetary donations for animal-related issues are preferred and strongly recommended they be donated directly to our NGOs (DFL, DECHC, HSPPR, etc.) supporting the disaster response.
- Material donations such as hay, dog and cat food, equipment, etc., will be processed through the Mass Care Desk (ESF6/6a) in close coordination with Logistics at the Douglas County EOC. Offers for this type of donation may be declined or delayed until the donations management infrastructure is established.
- Appropriate messaging detailing the most helpful types of donations will be conveyed immediately through the Public Information Officer (PIO) Desk in the Emergency Operations Center.

## **VII. ORGANIZATION, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **ORGANIZATION**

Animal disaster response may fall to a wide variety of volunteer teams, humane associations and animal control agencies affiliated with, and under the auspices of, the Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

The OEM serves as the lead agency in the development and supervision of any animal response team working on behalf of the county during a large-scale emergency or disaster incident.

### **LEAD & SUPPORTING AGENCIES**

The following describes the overarching roles and responsibilities of county, municipal, state, federal, non-governmental and volunteer organizations.

OEM is the lead agency for Emergency Animal Response in Douglas County. The lead position for animal assistance is the Douglas County Animal Response Team Coordinator. During an emergency that requires animal response, the coordinator will report to the Emergency Operations Center (if activated) or will support virtually. In Douglas County the shelter location will typically be the Douglas County Fairgrounds, although others have been identified as alternate sheltering facilities.

Support Agencies & Entities include but are not limited to:

- American Red Cross
- American Humane Association
- Code3 Associates
- Colorado State Department of Agriculture
- Colorado State Human Services Department, ESF6 Coordinator
- Colorado State University Extension Office
- Colorado State Veterinarian
- Colorado Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster
- Dumb Friends League
- Douglas County Facilities, Fleet & Emergency Support Services
- Douglas County Fairgrounds
- Douglas County Open Space
- Douglas County Public Health Department
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office Animal Control (Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region)
- Douglas Elbert County Horse Council
- National Animal Rescue and Shelter Coalition (NARSC)
- North Central Region Animal Emergency Committee
- Rocky Mountain Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps
- Tri-County Health Department
- US Department of Agriculture (APHIS)

<b>Local Planning Matrix for Animal Issues</b>						
	Non-commercial Backyard Livestock Sheltering	Companion Animal Sheltering	Animal Evacuation	Intermediary Transportation	Animal Search & Rescue	Veterinary Care
OEM/CART	U	U				L
Denver Dumb Friends League		L	S	S	S	S
Douglas Elbert County Horse Council	L					S
Douglas County Sheriff's Office Animal Control - HSPPR	S	S	L	L	L	
Rocky Mountain VMRC						S
Lead (L)                  Unified Lead (U)                  Support (S)						

Table 1 – Local Planning Matrix for Animal Issues

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following describes the overarching roles and responsibilities of county, municipal, state, federal, non-governmental and volunteer organizations.

**Animal Evacuation and Transportation**

During an evacuation, evacuee transport will allow for service animals to be transported with their owners. Should evacuee transport be necessary for those with companion animals and non-commercial backyard livestock, every effort will be made to evacuate the animals to the same evacuation point as their owners.

**Animal Search & Rescue and Animal Sheltering in Place**

Animal Search & Rescue will be activated for assistance with “requests for rescue” by evacuees who wish to retrieve animals left behind or provide care for those animals if the animals are sheltered in place. The HSPPR Animal Control Officers will coordinate with the DCSO Patrol Division. If conditions are determined to be safe by the Patrol Division, the HSPPR or their designees will conduct the missions. Animal retrieval and/or care will be provided only by HSPPR Animal Control Officers or their qualified designees.

### **Animal Sheltering**

In Douglas County, the Douglas County Fairgrounds is the primary disaster shelter and can accommodate sheltering services for people and their animals. The American Red Cross and the numerous animal shelter teams will assist the DC Fairgrounds staff during activation by staffing the check-in/check-out process for humans and their animals, care for all animals that need extra assistance, and care, identification and reunification for those animals brought without an owner. Animals will be cared for in conjunction with owners by the qualified partner teams. Any other needed resource for a specialty animal type will be provided either at the shelter or the animal will be transported to an appropriate agency for sheltering and care (e.g., reptiles, specialty birds, etc.). Owners are encouraged to visit their animals as their time allows but are not required to do so. Additionally, partners may be asked to help provide appropriate food and/or veterinarian care during this period. The lead agency for animal sheltering and care is OEM. During an evacuation affecting non-commercial backyard livestock that include sheep, cattle, horses, donkeys, a Brand Inspector will be used during deactivation of the shelter to ensure animals are released to their proper owners, as Colorado is a brand-inspection state.

### **Animal Control and Stray Management**

Basic animal control functions will be maintained during disasters to the extent possible. Such functions include responding to public reports related to stray animals or animal problems, animal bites, carcass removal, and collection of stray animals. The lead agency for this is the DCSO Animal Control (HSPPR).

### **Veterinary Medical Care and Services**

During an emergency event, there may be a need to care for injured or ill animals, decontamination, administer infection control programs and coordinate with public health relating to zoonotic disease and animal disease management, especially at shelter sites. The lead agency for coordination of this is OEM.

### **Animal/Owner Reunification and Recovery**

Animal/owner reunification can be a difficult task following an evacuation. Lost & Found management procedures will be documented through the check-in sheets completed by transporters. During an evacuation of non-commercial backyard livestock, the Brand Inspector will be activated for identification purposes. OEM will be the lead agency for coordination and management of this process.

## **ANIMAL SHELTERING LOCATIONS**

The primary animal shelter location for non-commercial backyard livestock and companion animals is the Douglas County Fairgrounds (500 Fairgrounds Drive in Castle Rock, CO 80104). This facility allows for co-location of human and animal sheltering and will be utilized whenever available. Other animal shelter locations include but are not limited to:

- Douglas County Open Space Properties (non-commercial backyard livestock)
- Douglas County Law Enforcement Facility Tactical Building (companion animals)
- Adjoining and Available County Fairgrounds (all categories)

## **DOUGLAS COUNTY ANIMAL RESPONSE TRAILER**

The Douglas County Animal Response Trailer is a resource trailer stocked with animal support gear such as animal crates, feed/water bowls, feed/water buckets, halters and lead ropes, and other non-perishable items needed during an incident requiring animal evacuation and sheltering support. The trailer is housed at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. In addition to the DC cache trailer, there are 9 cache trailers, 2 panel trailers and 1 mobile shelter available for support and located throughout the North Central Region (NCR).

## **XII. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The Animal Annex is designed to be the principal source for guidance concerning animal disaster response in Douglas County.

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for developing and maintaining this Animal Annex.

This annex is a product of the Douglas County Office of Emergency Management and serves as an annex of the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As such the policies, procedures and practices outlined in the County EOP govern this annex. OEM coordinates the maintenance and updates of this annex as necessary on a schedule deemed appropriate by the OEM Director. An update of this annex may or may not coincide with the maintenance and update schedule of the EOP. Record of changes, approval, and dissemination of the County EOP will also apply to this annex.

Updates to this annex can be made independently to updates to the EOP for multiple reasons, including but not limited to changes in policy/procedure, improvements and recommendations based on real life events, exercises, etc., or required changes or additions to local evacuation map information. In addition, evacuation procedures are ever changing as new technology, resources, best practices, lessons learned, etc. are updated and included in this annex.