

BDPNN MINUTES 24 OCTOBER 2013

The 24 October meeting of the Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network featured an informative overview of disaster PET CARE by Emily King Colwell, Berkeley CERT instructor representing City of Berkeley Animal Care Services.

Her talk covered the following topics, pertinent for pet owners and those who will deal with neighborhood and stray dogs and cats within the early period (first 72 hours) following a major disaster. What follows are highlights of Emily's presentation. For more detailed information consider taking the City's CERT class on animal response, offered periodically:

<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=82596>

INDIVIDUAL/HOUSEHOLD/CACHE PREPAREDNESS – in advance of an emergency/disaster

Supplies:

--Provide and store food, water and medication supplies for your pet as part of your household preparedness (see the city's *Disaster Preparedness Plan for Pets* at: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Fire/DisasterPrepPets.pdf>)

--Cache supplies should include: cheap slip leashes, some pet carriers, towels for handling, confining pets found alone in or out of houses during disaster response period

Create pet ID **Information:**

--Be sure each pet wears an ID (tags, microchip)

--Pet owner: prepare descriptive information (name, age, description, PRINT photo of each of your pets for later identification after disaster)

--Neighborhood group: augment neighborhood roster with pet information so that nearby residents can identify who is in a house or running loose after a disaster

Develop a Pet **Buddy System:**

--Collaborate with your nearest neighbors and know each other's pets, their habits

--Agree to look out for, check on each other's pets when they are alone

--Learn each other's preferences for handling, care

PET MANAGEMENT DURING FIRST 72 HOURS after a major disaster

NOTE: If we experience a major disaster there are national pet responder groups that will arrive in the area, but probably not be set up for the first 72 hours, to establish and coordinate in conjunction with Berkeley Animal Care Services and other city departments/responders as well as the National Red Cross, pet shelters, usually in the vicinity of Red Cross shelters for human residents. This is mandated by federal law, and these emergency responders have not only experience in this area, but have coordinated response for the most effective and efficient results. Shelters will be safe and secure and probably animals that arrive with their owners will be sheltered within the same vicinity.

YOUR WORK AS A RESIDENT and NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

WARNING: As with human rescue, **DO NOT** create more victims by entering dangerously unstable buildings, do not confront terrified or hostile animals or try to handle or treat them, if there is **ANY** possibility of injury to yourself or co-workers. **BUT** do try to:

FIND and account for pets during your Search and Rescue operations. If possible try to block off escape routes and hiding places out of a room and within a given room.

When possible **CONFINE** pets that are alone, preferably in their own home/surroundings or in a carrier if available and it is possible to coax or carry the animal into it

RECORD descriptive information in detail including place found, by whom, exact hour and date. Always keep a paper trail on the animal, even after handing responsibility over to someone else

COORDINATE with those watching over or taking care of any pet and pass recorded information to those persons. This will make location/reuniting with owners much easier. Consider adding pet information as known to your neighborhood bulletin board

CARE: Begins with a caution, observation and analysis of whether you can begin to work with a given animal. Emily reviewed postures, fear and anger reactions of both dogs and cats. Caution, calm and slow movements are essential for anyone attempting to interact with a pet, regardless of how experienced the handler is or how calm and welcoming the pet is under normal circumstances. Animal bites and scratches **CAN** have dangerous medical consequences.

Necessary and possible actions for neighborhood responders in the absence or unavailability of pet owner:

--Provide **water, food and shelter** along with some kind of confinement (ranging from leashes, including hopefully carriers, or confinement in a room in a building)

--**Transporting** pets to a safer, more secure situation – **ONLY** if this can be done without injury to the responder or escape of the pet. Leashes and carriers are essential

--First aid care for pets requires some specific observations and skills. Emily reviewed basic care for bleeding, breaks, observing vital signs (for further information see below).

Emily suggested some FEMA mini courses available at: www.training.fema.gov/is and especially recommended courses 100, 200, 700 and 800

MORE DETAILS ON TREATING AND CARING FOR INJURED PETS.

The best advice is to enroll in the city CERT class on animal response with six hours of instruction.

Try to provide a quiet, dark and warm place for any injured pets. They will probably want to be left alone, and it is important to control one's instinct to pet and nurture a sick animal especially one in pain. This does not preclude unobtrusive observation. **ALWAYS PROTECT**

YOURSELF, again to avoid another casualty. Do not chase down any animal, even if injured; they will want to run. Work only with animals willing to have you work with them. MOST INJURIES REQUIRE PROFESSIONAL CARE AND SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT. But you might be able to:

STOP BLEEDING: Use steady pressure. Follow similar directions for human first aid.

CONTROL INHALATION OF VOMITUS: Position animal to get vomitus out and not backwards. Elevate animal's rear.

BROKEN BONES that are showing. Splint lightly only with a rolled up sheet of paper which will not kill tissue.

CHECK VITAL SIGNS: If you can do this, the information could be helpful to veterinary services when available. Observe trends over the course of time rather than noting exact counts. Heart rate/rhythm; respiratory rate; mucosal color; pupil dilation; rectal temperature (problematic in many cases due to animal reaction and lack of adequate responder training).