

Veterinarian Disaster Responder Entry Level Core Competencies  
(Awareness Level Training)

1.0 Understands skills needed for personal and family preparedness for disasters and animal health emergencies<sup>i</sup>

- 1.1 Knows how to prepare a personal/family disaster plan
- 1.2 Knows how to gather disaster supplies/equipment consistent with personal/family plan
- 1.3 Understands the importance of practicing one's personal/family disaster plan regularly
- 1.4 Describe methods for enhancing personal resilience, including physical and mental health and well-being, as part of disaster preparation and planning<sup>ii</sup>
- 1.5 Understands how to assist animal owners in preparing disaster plans
- 1.6 Understands the benefits of having a business Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and be familiar with resources where one can obtain that training<sup>iii</sup>

2.0 Understands one's expected role(s) in organizational and community response plans activated during a disaster or animal health emergency<sup>iv</sup>

- 2.1 Recognizes formal opportunities and the need for trained veterinarian disaster responders at the local, state, and national level<sup>v</sup>
- 2.2 Recognizes the veterinarian's role within the incident management hierarchy and chain of command established in a disaster or animal health emergency<sup>vi</sup>
- 2.3 Recognizes mechanisms for reporting actual and potential health threats through the chain of command/authority established in a disaster or animal health emergency
- 2.4 Understands why an ongoing professional relationship with each of the following is important for One Health inter-disciplinary collaboration: local emergency manager, local/state veterinary response organization, local/state public health office, state public health veterinarian, state Chief Animal Health Official/State Veterinarian, federal Area Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC), state extension services<sup>vii</sup>
- 2.5 Knows the role of Community Animal Response Teams (CARTS) and State Animal/Agricultural Response Teams (SARTS)

3.0 Has situational awareness of, and solutions to, actual/potential health concerns that may be encountered before, during, and after a disaster or animal health emergency<sup>viii</sup>

- 3.1 Identify general indicators or epidemiological clues that may signal the onset or exacerbation of a disaster or animal health emergency
- 3.2 Describe measures to maintain situational awareness before, during, and after a disaster or animal health emergency
- 3.3 Understands the health and fitness requirements that may be encountered in austere environments during disaster and animal health emergencies<sup>ix</sup>
- 3.4 Understands the importance of health and safety of self and others<sup>x</sup>
- 3.5 Has an awareness of the critical elements of a disaster or animal disease emergency by seeking, filtering, and processing information from available sources. Supports collective awareness through the provision of information<sup>xi</sup>
- 3.6 Understands the potential mental health impacts on both responders and animal owners from the effects of disasters and animal health emergencies; knows where to find psychological first aid resources (for temporary answers), and professional referrals for others or self (for longer-term help)

4.0 Recognizes potential impacts of various types of disasters and animal health emergencies on resources and how they impact animals along with potential solutions/workarounds to those impacts

4.1 Describe the potential impact of various disasters and animal health emergencies to each FEMA Lifeline (Safety and Security; Food-Water-Shelter; Health-Medical; Energy; Communications; Transportation; Hazardous Materials)

4.2 Describe how significant interruption of each FEMA Lifeline can impact animal health and response

4.3 Describe how needed resources should be requisitioned during disasters and animal health emergencies

4.4 Describe best practices surrounding animal evacuation, animal rescue, animal decontamination, animal triage, animal emergency sheltering, and animal reunification for various types of disasters

5.0 Has knowledge of biosecurity and animal welfare principles that are required in dealing with animals in disasters or animal health emergencies

5.1 Describe the various levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that are used in disasters and animal health emergencies along with the proper donning and doffing<sup>xii</sup>

5.2 Describe the use of zones and control areas at animal response locations (emergency shelter/farm/etc.) that also include airflow considerations

5.3 Describe the use of zones to maximize animal welfare in emergency shelters

6.0 Has knowledge of reporting and responding to zoonotic, transboundary, and foreign animal diseases (FADs) and how to mitigate potential impacts on human and environmental health (One Health)

6.1 Explain both federal and state agencies that have jurisdictional authority over zoonotic, transboundary, and FADs

6.2 Explain how reporting of suspected cases of zoonotic, transboundary, and FADs each need to be handled

7.0 Has knowledge of euthanasia/depopulation techniques for various animal species and appropriate disposal options for animal carcasses (both small numbers and large numbers of carcasses) that may be required for animals in disasters or animal health emergencies<sup>xiii</sup>

7.1 Explain the difference between euthanasia and depopulation

7.2 Explain under what circumstances depopulation techniques would be appropriate during disasters and animal health emergencies

7.3 Explain lines of authority for who makes decisions about depopulation vs euthanasia

7.4 Explain current accepted methods of carcass disposal and associated environmental considerations

7.5 Explain lines of authority involved in deciding how large quantities of animal carcasses are disposed

7.6 Explain appropriate public information channels to utilize to minimize public misperception

8.0 Complete the following FEMA online courses (.X=current version of course at time taken) found at <https://training.fema.gov/is><sup>xiv</sup>

8.1 IS-100.X – Introduction to the Incident Command System<sup>xv</sup>

8.2 IS-200.X – Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response<sup>xvi</sup>

8.3 IS-700.X – An Introduction to the National Incident Management System (NIMS)<sup>xvii</sup>

For questions or comments, email [DisasterCertificate@avma.org](mailto:DisasterCertificate@avma.org)

## Additional Notes for Core Competencies

<sup>i</sup> Information for a personal/family preparedness plan should be consistent with information provided at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

<sup>ii</sup> See also 3.6

<sup>iii</sup> It is not expected that a candidate for the Basic Veterinarian Disaster Responder Certificate complete a separate course in COOP training, but it is important that they understand the concept (awareness level training). AVMA has a separate certificate program for COOP training which veterinarians or veterinary staff can complete to show competency in this area. This training can be found at <https://axon.avma.org/>. Completion of module 1 of this series will be satisfactory for this requirement. As with all core competencies, other developed training may also be approved by AVMA to satisfy this requirement.

<sup>iv</sup> This competency group should cover some of the veterinary response logistic considerations such as license reciprocity, liability, and need to not self-deploy

<sup>v</sup> AVMA has an on-demand webinar on opportunities for veterinarians in animal disaster response. This material can be found at <https://axon.avma.org/local/catalog/view/product.php?productid=8>. Other training will also be considered acceptable.

<sup>vi</sup> This core sub-competency may be met by completing IS-100.x, IS-200.x, and IS-700.x. See also 8.0

<sup>vii</sup> This sub-competency should not only focus on large disaster events, but also consider disease outbreaks and smaller emergency events such as local animal technical rescue responses where local private practitioners can engage with emergency response personnel to create a more holistic response to a local animal rescue event.

<sup>viii</sup> Principles should be consistent with the [Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings](#) and the [Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions for Zoonotic Disease Prevention in Veterinary Personnel](#)

<sup>ix</sup> Explain general health risks associated with disasters and animal health emergencies. Explain personal fitness risks and requirements associated with disasters and animal health emergencies

<sup>x</sup> Explain general safety risks associated with disasters and animal health emergencies. Describe risk reduction measures that can be implemented to mitigate or prevent infectious and hazardous exposures in a disaster or animal health emergency. Demonstrate proficiency in the assessment, selection, and use of health and safety measures (e.g., technology, equipment, devices, situations). Adhere to applicable industry regulations, guidelines, and safety precautions related to the use of PPE and other devices.

<sup>xi</sup> Identify sources of information relevant to critical elements of disaster or emergency. Use tools (e.g., communication) to support situational awareness. Understand the importance of reviewing situation reports to remain up to date on a response. Maintain an awareness of own behavior and consider the perspectives of others to resolve or avoid cultural issues or misinterpretations.

<sup>xii</sup> Demonstrate knowledge of effective use of various levels of personal protective equipment (PPE).

<sup>xiii</sup> Euthanasia and depopulation techniques taught should be consistent with the [AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals](#) and the [AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals](#)

<sup>xiv</sup> Additional FEMA courses to consider recommending (but not required for certification) so that participants understand what animal related material other individuals are being taught are:

- IS-10.X – Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness
- IS-11.X – Animals in Disasters: Community Planning
- IS-111.X – Livestock in Disasters

<sup>xv</sup> Copy of FEMA certificate will be required for AVMA certification

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