

# CLINIC DISASTER PLAN

GENERAL PREPAREDNESS • EVACUATION



SHELTER-IN-PLACE • POST-DISASTER



*Despite the devastation and loss Hurricane Harvey left in its path, it reminded all of us that the veterinary community might have separate members, but we are all part of the same family.*

*- Ryan Buck, President of Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists*

# Think it won't happen to you? Depending on your location, you may routinely think about hurricanes, wildfires, floods, or winter weather. But what if...

- A natural gas leak forced you to evacuate your patients and staff?
- A tornado destroyed a nearby colleague's practice?
- Pandemic influenza kept all your employees home sick?
- An electrical fire destroyed your clinic?
- A broken water pipe flooded your building?



**A** disaster, large or small, can impact any clinic when least expected. While we all prefer to believe bad things will not happen to us, it does. Small businesses such as veterinary clinics are the most vulnerable to the economic impact of disasters. Some simple planning will mean the difference between your clinic surviving or not being able to recover. Make a difference among your employees, clients, and community and lead by example by promoting disaster planning.

This is a tool to get you started with your clinic disaster plan. Use it as a quick fill in the blank/checklist. Tuck the documents inside this brochure like a folder. Make a second copy and store it in a second location that is outside your immediate vicinity or in “the cloud”.

Foster relationships with fellow veterinarians, so you can join forces in the event of a disaster. Ideally, it will become a nearby “sister” clinic outside your immediate area where patients and clients can seek emergency care. Consider agreeing on financial arrangements with the sister clinic if the disaster is prolonged and facilities need to be shared. Inform your clients of the arrangements.

Disaster response starts locally at the county level. Your county judge is

in charge. Most judges have an emergency management coordinator. Check your county's website to find out who it is and if an Animal Issues Committee exists.

## STAFF PREPAREDNESS

All staff must be personally prepared before they can assist the clinic, its clients, or its patients. Encourage them to develop a disaster plan and kit for their household. A basic kit contains medications, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, photos/video of property and pets, and essential documents. They also need appropriate means to transport their personal pets in an event requiring evacuation.

## CONTACT LISTS

Emergency contact information for every staff member must be kept current and stored off site. A clinic owner or designated person will establish the safety and status of each employee, determine who is available to assist, and assign duties.

**CLINIC NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
has prepared this disaster plan to assist its staff members and clients during a disaster. We are vulnerable to a variety of threats including natural and man-made events which could make it necessary to evacuate our clinic, or to shelter-in-place and continue to provide essential care to the patients in our custody.

**IF A DISASTER OR SIGNIFICANT EVENT IMPACTS THE CLINIC, STAFF MEMBERS WILL CALL:**

- 1 **Name/Number – Owner:**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 **Name/Number – Other manager or emergency contact:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

*If these two people cannot be reached (or local communications are down), staff should contact*

- 3 **Name/Number – Contact outside immediate area:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

All staff members must check in if physically able to do so. After initial contact, staff should check in daily or as needed until the crisis has passed.

**IMPORTANT NON-EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

*In an emergency, Dial 911*

**Police Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sheriff: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Control: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Utilities:** \_\_\_\_\_

Gas: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Water: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

**Alarm company:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Emergency Management Coordinator:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local emergency animal hospital:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sister clinic/alternate practice location in our vicinity:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

After hours contact: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sister clinic/alternate practice location OUTSIDE our area:**

After hours contact: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local VMA contact:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## INSURANCE

In order to preserve our clinic and our livelihoods, we have the following insurance policies:

- ☐ Property Insurance ☐ Flood Insurance ☐ Liability Insurance
- ☐ Worker's compensation ☐ Practice preservation ☐ Special riders
- ☐ Other

Insurance policies are reviewed and updated annually and kept at this location: \_\_\_\_\_.

Digital/cloud copy is stored: \_\_\_\_\_.

Off-site copy is stored: \_\_\_\_\_.

## GENERAL PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Business continuity plan (can be assisted by a professional planner, or "do-it-yourself")
- ☐ Asset list with serial numbers, model numbers, year purchased and replacement value
- ☐ Video or photos of clinic and contents
- ☐ Computer back-up of records off-site
- ☐ Paper copies of fee schedule, other documents in case of power outage
- ☐ Emergency contact lists for staff and suppliers
- ☐ Written and posted policy for boarding and hospitalized patients that addresses emergencies and notifies clients of disaster plan details (where practice will evacuate to, contact information).
- ☐ Brochures about basic disaster preparedness and pet identification for clients
- ☐ Sign-off sheet for staff that have completed a personal disaster kit
- ☐ Training sign-off sheet for staff disaster plan and drills—monthly/quarterly/annual
- ☐ First aid/CPR employee training—for animals and humans
- ☐ Extra large ziplock bags to protect important documents
- ☐ Scan important documents (Insurance policies) onto flash drive/cloud-based folder

## EVACUATION CHECKLIST (When there is time to prepare):

- ☐ Safe evacuation of all staff and animals
- ☐ Post contact information for clients if animals remain in your care
- ☐ Leave message or phone number directing clients to you
- ☐ Determine how the "all-clear" will be determined to return to the clinic
- ☐ Windows and doors secured
- ☐ Loose outdoor items secured
- ☐ Flammable materials removed if possible
- ☐ Hazardous materials labeled and secured
- ☐ Controlled substances secured or removed
- ☐ Cadaver freezer emptied
- ☐ Refrigerated inventory protected
- ☐ Notify alarm company
- ☐ Unplug electrical equipment
- ☐ Elevate expensive items subject to flooding
- ☐ Shut off electrical breakers, gas and water
- ☐ Other

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Store and rotate supplies such as non-perishable food and potable water
- ☐ Store enough food/water and personal medications for housed pets for 1 week
- ☐ Generator
- ☐ Cleaning supplies and dry goods
- ☐ Flashlights, weather radio, batteries
- ☐ Consider change of clothes and entertainment (games, etc)
- ☐ Safest place within the clinic to shelter:

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Establish a cut-off time for accepting boarders based on disaster watch or warning criteria
- ☐ Have all boarding clients sign and receive a copy of the evacuation policy
- ☐ Protect outdoor pipes from winter weather
- ☐ Contingency plans for heat, blankets, etc.
- ☐ Identify which staff may be able to work based on ease of access to the clinic if roads are affected

## POST-DISASTER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check safety and security of people and animals. Check caging for integrity.
- ☐ Personal protective equipment: rubber/canvas gloves, water-proof boots, eye protection, dust mask
- ☐ Assess damage to facility: videotape and photos
- ☐ Protect property from future damage to help ensure no problems with insurance coverage
- ☐ Contact insurance company BEFORE any clean-up or repairs
- ☐ Basic safety repairs done before resuming work
- ☐ Crisis counseling/mental health support for employees and self

### Checklist of documents to include inside this packet:

- ☐ Insurance policies
- ☐ Staff emergency contact list/phone tree
- ☐ Contact list for crucial suppliers
- ☐ Evacuation diagram/plan

This plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or as the need arises.

Practice Owner

Date

### Congratulations!

### You have a plan and you know how to use it. Now,

Talk to your staff and clients. Make sure your clients know the clinic's plan, and that they have a personal disaster plan in place. Collect alternate phone numbers, possibly from outside your area, for each client in case they cannot be reached in an emergency.

*Update, train for and exercise your plan at least once a year.*

**Remember:** Preparedness is a never-ending cycle, not a one-time event. Involve your staff, discuss and update plans regularly, and consider every aspect of your clinic.

**For comprehensive continuity of business operations plans, evacuation planning, crisis communication plans and reference material for personal planning for you and your staff, visit:**

[tvma.org](http://tvma.org) • [avma.org/disaster](http://avma.org/disaster) • [ready.gov](http://ready.gov)