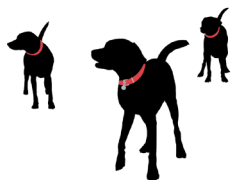


DISASTER PLANNING FOR RESCUES & RURAL SHELTERS

A Plain-Language Guide for Disaster Planning



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ABOUT THIS DISASTER PLANNING GUIDE

This planning guide is designed for independent animal rescues — especially those in rural communities — that may not have formal connections to emergency management agencies.

You don't need an emergency management background to use this. Plain language throughout.

PART 1: KNOW YOUR RESCUE'S REALITY

The 72-Hour Rule

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND

“You are your own first responder for the first 72 hours.”

During a hurricane, flood, tornado, or wildfire, outside help may take days to arrive. National organizations do not deploy to small local incidents in the first 12 hours. Local emergency management is overwhelmed with human life safety.

Plan to protect your animals and your people without outside help — for at least 72 hours. Everything else builds from this.

What Success Looks Like in a Disaster

Success is NOT maintaining normal operations. Success means:

- Every animal is accounted for
- Every person — volunteers and fosters — is safe
- Communication is maintained with your foster network
- Animals receive basic care for at least 72 hours
- Your rescue is able to recover without being overwhelmed

Reminder for Rescue Leaders

You are not responsible for solving your community's entire animal crisis during a disaster. Your job is to protect the animals already in your care. Do that well. That is enough.

Disaster-Specific Triggers for Gulf Coast and Southern Rescues

Many rural rescues — especially in Louisiana and neighboring states — face specific disaster triggers that require early action. Do not wait for a Warning. A Watch should put you in preparation mode immediately.

trigger	what to do
Tropical Storm WATCH	Start preparations: fuel, supplies, foster briefing
Hurricane WATCH	Begin evacuation planning. Put fosters on alert.
Hurricane WARNING	Evacuate or shelter in place — decision must be made NOW
Flash Flood WARNING	Immediate action — water can rise faster than you can load animals
Levee concern or overtopping alert	Assume worst case. Evacuate animals immediately.
Extreme Heat Advisory (3+ days > 100°F)	Activate heat protocol. Check on animals every 2-4 hours.
Extended power outage (>24 hrs in extreme temps)	Execute shelter-in-place temp protocol or evacuate
Tornado Watch	Identify safe interior rooms. Move animals to them.
Tornado Warning	Move to shelter immediately. Do not drive.



PART 2: CAPACITY-BASED DECISION THRESHOLDS

Rescue leaders often ignore warning signs because they feel obligated to keep helping. These thresholds remove the emotional decision-making. When the trigger is met — act.

when this happens...	... do this immediately
Occupancy exceeds 120% of your stated capacity	SUSPEND all new intake. Post publicly: "Not accepting animals at this time."
Only 2 weeks of food or supplies remaining	Activate overflow fosters. Contact supply partners. Issue a donation request.
Transportation need exceeds available drivers	Begin evacuation planning NOW. Call transport partners. You cannot wait.
More than 25% of foster homes are impacted	Request external assistance from partner rescues and state animal response team.
Power has been out more than 24 hours (heat > 90°F or cold < 40°F)	Execute your temperature protocol. Move animals to conditioned space or evacuate.
A foster home goes silent for more than 24 hours	Attempt contact by all methods. Dispatch a welfare check if no contact within 48 hrs.



PART 3: YOUR FOUR FOUNDATIONAL PLANS

Every rescue needs four simple plans. They don't need to be long. They need to exist, be written down, and be known by at least two people.

Plan 1 — The Animal Census

A rescue cannot protect animals it cannot account for. The census is your foundation. What Your Census Must Include:

- Animal name, species, breed, color, microchip number
- Current location — which foster home or your facility
- Foster name and phone number
- Medical conditions and daily medications
- Current photo — one per animal minimum
- Evacuation priority
(Priority 1 = medical/meds, Priority 2 = young/fragile, Priority 3 = healthy adults)

Low-Tech Census Options

Low-tech alternatives: No database? No problem. A spiral notebook with one page per animal works fine.

Example of a low-tech system: Index cards — one per animal, in a waterproof ziplock bag.

Photo backup: Take a photo of each animal and text them to yourself — they'll be on your phone even without internet.

Spreadsheet alternative: A single printed table updated with a pen. Tape it to the inside of your binder cover.

my animal census — where is it stored?

Digital location: Google Drive folder titled 'Rescue Emergency Records' — shared with backup coordinator	
Printed copy location: Blue binder on the office shelf, last updated June 1	
Backup person with access: Sarah Williams, backup coordinator — 318-555-4444	
Weekly update reminder set? Sarah Williams, backup coordinator — 318-555-4444	
Date last updated: Yes — every Sunday at 5pm	



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COMPANION DOCUMENT

Use the Animal Census Template (included in this toolkit) for a ready-to-print form with all required fields.

Plan 2 — Communication Plan

Build Your Chain Before a Disaster

- Primary coordinator + backup coordinator — both must know the full plan
- Group messaging platform for all fosters — test it before you need it
- Printed contact list — cell service fails; paper does not
- Backup communication method for areas with poor cell service

The 24-Hour Check-In Rule

Every foster home checks in every 24 hours during a disaster.

Even a 5-word text is enough: “Safe. Animals OK. Staying put.”

Silence = a problem that needs immediate follow-up.

Low-Tech Option

If digital group chats aren’t reliable in your area, use a phone tree. Person A calls B and C. B calls D and E. C calls F and G. Works without smartphones or internet.

my communication plan

Primary coordinator:

Sarah Williams — 318-555-5555 (cell) — text preferred

Backup coordinator:

Tom Rivera — 318-555-1234 — available 24/7

Group messaging platform:

GroupMe — group named ‘River Bend Rescue Emergency’

Backup communication method:

Phone tree — Sarah calls foster 1 and 2; Tom calls foster 3 and 4

Phone tree (who calls whom):

Coordinator calls Foster Lead A and Foster Lead B. Foster Lead A calls fosters 1-3. Foster Lead B calls fosters 4-6.

Social media admin:

Karen Smith — has rescue Facebook login, will post updates

Donor communication contact:

Board Chair Lisa Moore — 318-555-9999



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Plan 3 — Evacuation Plan

Know Your Triggers (Write Them Down)

- Mandatory evacuation order issued for your parish
- Hurricane Warning issued (not Watch — Warning) for your area
- Flood watch upgraded to flash flood warning
- Your backup coordinator says: evacuate

Logistics You Must Resolve Before a Disaster

- How many animals can you move in one vehicle load? In two loads?
- Do you have enough crates for every animal simultaneously?
- Who are your 3 drivers? Do they know they're on the list?
- Has your destination confirmed it will accept your animals?

Low-Tech Planning Tools

Low-tech tip: Print a map with your foster home locations marked. Draw your primary evacuation route in red. Draw your backup route in blue. Post it on the wall next to your emergency binder.

Dry-erase board idea: A whiteboard with foster names and current animal counts, updated weekly. Visible to anyone in your office at a glance.

my evacuation plan

Evacuation triggers: Mandatory order for Rapides Parish OR Hurricane Warning for central LA	
Primary evacuation destination: Jones Family Farm, 123 County Rd 14, Pineville LA. Mary Jones: 318-555-5555. Capacity: 15 dogs.	
Backup destination: Humane Society of Cenla — confirmed pre-arrangement for 10 animals	
Driver 1 (vehicle + capacity): Mary Jones — F-150 + 16-ft trailer — 20 crates	
Driver 2 (vehicle + capacity): Tom Rivera — minivan — 6 carriers	
Driver 3 (vehicle + capacity):	
Total single-trip capacity:	
Estimated trips needed:	



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Plan 4 — Shelter-in-Place Plan

- Identify the safest area of your facility — interior room, lowest flood risk
- Generator: do you have one? Is it fueled? Is it tested? Who operates it?
- Store at least 72 hours of food, water, and medications — check every 3 months
- Backup feeding plan if your supplier is closed
- Heat contingency: fans, ice packs, wet towels, access to a cooled room
- Cold contingency: extra blankets, heated rooms, portable heater on hand

my shelter-in-place plan	
Safest shelter area: Interior hallway with no windows — lowest flood risk	
Generator: Yes — 5,500W Honda, stored in shed, tested April 2025, 15 gallons fuel	
72-hour food supply: Blue storage bins in back room — marked ‘EMERGENCY ONLY’	
72-hour water supply: 30 gallons in 5-gal jugs in supply closet	
Medication supply: Emergency meds bag — labeled, in fridge. Backup: copies at vet office.	
Heat backup: 2 box fans + frozen water bottle rotation every 4 hours	
Cold backup: Portable electric heater, extra fleece blankets in emergency bins	



PART 4: PREPARING YOUR FOSTER NETWORK

Your disaster plan is only as strong as your least-prepared foster home.
Every foster is a satellite shelter.

- Distribute the Foster Family Disaster Guide to every foster — see companion document
- Review the guide with new fosters at orientation
- Complete a Foster Home Profile Sheet for every household — see companion document
- Identify foster homes in high-risk areas (flood zones, fire zones) and give them priority attention
- Identify fosters without reliable transportation — those households need a backup plan

The Five-Question Foster Readiness Check

RECOMMENDED FOSTER PREPAREDNESS CONVERSATION (10 MINUTES, PHONE OR IN PERSON):

1. Do you know what your evacuation trigger is?
2. Do you have a destination that accepts animals?
3. Do you have a 72-hour supply kit for your foster animals?
4. Do you have my backup coordinator’s number saved?
5. Do you understand the 24-hour check-in rule?

If they answer yes to all five — you have a prepared foster.
If they answer no to any — that’s your planning work.

my foster network snapshot	
Total active foster homes:	
Foster homes with 72-hour kits: 6 out of 8 — need to follow up with Jones and Rivera	
Foster homes in flood zones: 3 — Jones (Zone A), Smith (Zone B), Williams (Zone A)	
Foster homes without reliable transport: 1 — Rivera family. Backup: Mary Jones can pick up.	
Date network last briefed: May 15, 2025 — pre-hurricane season briefing call	

PART 5: SUPPLIES AND FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

Building Your 72-Hour Supply Cache

Store in one location. Label everything 'EMERGENCY ONLY'.
Check and restock every 3 months.

animal supplies	yes/no	operations & equipment	yes/no
7-day food supply per animal		Generator + 15 gallons stored fuel	
7-day medication supply		Backup phone charger + power bank	
1 gal water/animal/day × 3 days		Cash — ATMs may be offline	
Food and water bowls		Emergency credit card / \$300 petty cash	
Labeled crates for every animal		Fuel in vehicles (fill when Watch issued)	
Carriers for cats/small animals		First aid kit — human and animal	
Leashes and slip leads		Printed contact list in waterproof bag	
Collar + ID tag on every animal		Flashlights + extra batteries	
Cleaning supplies + waste bags		Duct tape, zip ties, basic tools	
Towels and extra bedding		Animal census — printed backup copy	



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PART 6: WHO TO CALL AND HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

Set realistic expectations. Plan for the worst-case timeline and be pleasantly surprised when help arrives sooner.

who to call	when to expect help	what to ask for	how to find them
Your foster network	Immediate	Status check, animal pickup, emergency lodging	You already have their numbers
Partner rescues (area)	Same day	Temporary housing for overflow animals	Identify 2-3 before a disaster happens
Local veterinarian	Same day	Triage, medications, injury assessment	Pre-arrange now — don't wait for disaster
Parish/County Emergency Mgmt.	Same day (info only)	Evacuation orders, road closures, shelter sites	Parish website or call the courthouse
State Animal Response Team	24-72 hours	Field rescue, large-scale coordination	Find your state team at nasar.org
Regional humane society	24-72 hours	Overflow shelter, supply support	Call ahead — they may be impacted too
Transport support	48-72+ hours	Moving animals out of impact zone	Pre-register your rescue before a disaster
AIM / BISSELL Pet Foundation	48-72+ hours, major events	Coordination, deployment support, resources	bissellpetfoundation.org

How to Ask for Help — Use This Script

SCRIPT + COMPLETED EXAMPLE

“We are [RESCUE NAME] in [CITY, PARISH/COUNTY, STATE]. We have [#] dogs and [#] cats in foster care across [#] homes.

We are currently [sheltering in place / evacuating / stabilized].

We need [shelter space / transport / supplies / veterinary support].

We can self-sustain for approximately [#] more hours / days.

Our most urgent need right now is: ____.”

Example: “River Bend Animal Rescue, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana. 22 dogs, 8 cats, 6 foster homes — 3 affected. We are evacuating. Need transport for 12 large dogs. We have 48 hours of supplies. Most urgent need: driver with a trailer who can meet us in New Roads.”



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PART 7: RESCUE RESILIENCE SCORECARD

Answer honestly. Every 'No' is a planning task.

question	yes/no	if no – your action
Can we account for every animal's location within 2 hours?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: build your animal census and update it weekly. Use the Animal Census Template.
Can we contact every foster home within 1 hour?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: update your contact list and create a group text chain now.
Can we operate independently for 72 hours without outside help?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: build your 72-hour supply cache this week.
Can we evacuate all animals within 6 hours?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: assign crates, identify drivers, plan loading order. Use Transportation Inventory.
Do we have at least 2 backup leaders who know the plan?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: train a deputy coordinator. Give them a copy of this planning guide.
Do we have a written agreement with at least 1 rescue partner that identifies them by name and confirms their role?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: contact a neighboring rescue. Use the Mutual Aid Agreement Template.
Does every foster home have a written disaster plan?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: distribute the Foster Family Disaster Guide and schedule a brief call.
Do we have emergency funds or a credit card accessible?	☐ yes ☐ no	If no: establish a small emergency fund — even \$300 helps.

Interpreting Your Score

If you answered **YES** to all 8: strong foundation. Review every 6 months.

If you answered **NO** to 3 or more: prioritize those gaps before the next disaster season.

If you answered **NO** to 5 or more: contact AIM for planning support.

PART 8: DISASTER RECOVERY

After the Disaster — First Steps

1. Confirm all personnel and volunteers are safe
2. Account for every animal — compare to census
3. Assess facility before returning animals
4. Restock supplies before resuming operations
5. Contact foster network — identify who needs replacement fosters
6. Document all losses, expenses, and donations received
7. Post a public update — your community supported you and wants to know you're OK

Do NOT Resume Intake Until

- All current animals accounted for and stable
- Supplies fully restocked
- Foster homes restocked
- At least one backup leader available
- You, personally, have slept in the last 24 hours

A Note for Rescue Leaders

Rescue leaders often feel guilt after a disaster — especially if animals went missing, got injured, or operations didn't go perfectly.

Disasters are hard. Imperfect action in a crisis is better than paralysis.

You protected what you could with what you had. That is enough.

If you're struggling after a disaster event — please reach out to your AIM contact, a peer organization leader, or a mental health professional. You matter too.



PART 9: ANNEXES

The following documents are attached as annexes to this planning guide. Each annex begins on a new page and is also listed in the table of contents above.

document	use this for...
Quick Reference Card	One laminated page with your 72-hour timeline, priorities, and who to call
Disaster Activation Checklist	Step-by-step checklist from Watch > 0-6 hrs > 6-24 hrs > Recovery
Annex A — Foster Family Disaster Guide	Distribute to every foster home — plain language, all phases
Who To Call & How To Ask	Phase-by-phase scripts for every type of assistance request
Animal Census Template	Fill-in form with all required fields — print and update weekly
Annex C — Foster Home Profile Sheet	One page per foster — transport capacity, animals in care, and evacuation plan
Transportation Resource Inventory	All drivers, vehicles, dog crates, cat crates, carriers, and transport partner contacts
Annex D — Mutual Aid Agreement Template	Written agreement with partner rescues — identifies rescue partner by name, contact, and role — complete before disasters
Damage Assessment Form	Post-disaster form for facility, animal, foster, and supply losses
Disaster Expense Tracker	Log every purchase for grants, insurance, and donor reporting
Donation Request Templates	Ready-to-post social media and email appeals for 5 scenarios
Annex B — Annual Preparedness Calendar	Month-by-month tasks to maintain readiness year-round
Lost Animal & Reunification Guide	Step-by-step when a rescue animal goes missing during a disaster
Annex E — Managing Volunteers & Donations	Handling the surge of unplanned help that arrives after a disaster



ANNEX A | FOSTER FAMILY DISASTER GUIDE

You Are a Satellite Shelter — Here's What That Means

Thank you for being a foster family. You are not just a temporary home — you are a critical part of your rescue's disaster plan.

This guide tells you exactly what to do before, during, and after a disaster. It assumes you may not have emergency management experience. Plain language only.

You are not responsible for solving your community's entire animal crisis. Your job is to keep the animals in your care safe. That is enough.

SECTION 1 | BEFORE A DISASTER — GET READY NOW

Know Your Evacuation Triggers

These are the specific conditions that mean: LEAVE NOW. Do not wait for your rescue coordinator to tell you. If any of these conditions apply, begin your evacuation immediately:

- Mandatory evacuation order issued for your parish or county
- Hurricane warning (not watch — warning) for your area
- Flash flood warning and water is rising near your neighborhood
- Levee concern notice issued for your region
- Wildfire within 5 miles and wind is moving toward you
- Power out more than 24 hours in extreme heat (above 95°F) or freezing cold
- Our rescue coordinator calls or texts and says: GO

Understanding Watch vs. Warning

A WATCH means conditions are possible. A WARNING means conditions are happening or imminent.

WATCH = start preparing now.

WARNING = act now.

FOR HURRICANES: if a Watch is issued for your parish, begin packing and fueling up. Don't wait for the Warning.



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my evacuation plan — fill in now, review before every storm season

Primary evacuation destination: Jones Family Farm, 123 County Rd 14, Alexandria, LA 71301. Contact: Mary Jones, 318-555-5555. Accepts up to 10 dogs.	
Secondary (backup) destination: Motel 6 Natchitoches — pet-friendly, called ahead and confirmed	
Distance from my home: Primary: 45 min. Backup: 90 min.	
Evacuation trigger for ME: Any mandatory order for Rapides Parish OR hurricane warning anywhere in the state	
Will I call my rescue coordinator first? Yes — always. I will text: “Evacuating to [location] with [# animals]. ETA [time].”	
Date this plan was last reviewed:	

Build a 72-Hour Supply Kit for Your Foster Animals

Keep this kit packed and accessible at all times. Check it every 3 months.

animal supplies	records & id
☐ 7-day supply of food	☐ Photos of each foster (on your phone)
☐ 7-day supply of medications	☐ Microchip numbers written on paper
☐ Water (1 gal/animal/day × 3 days)	☐ Vaccine records — printed copy in ziplock
☐ Food and water bowls	☐ Medical history / special needs — printed
☐ Labeled crates for every animal	☐ Rescue coordinator’s name + phone + email
☐ Collar + ID tag on every animal	☐ Backup phone charger or power bank
☐ Leashes and slip leads	☐ Your own emergency contact list — printed
☐ Cleaning supplies + waste bags	☐ Cash (ATMs may be offline)

Low-Tech Alternatives That Work

Low-tech tip: No fancy systems needed. A gallon ziplock bag with printed records + a backpack with food + your carrier by the door = ready to go in 5 minutes.

Backup communication: If your cell service is unreliable, identify a neighbor or nearby contact who can relay messages between you and your rescue coordinator.

Example backup plan: “If I can’t reach my coordinator by phone, I will contact Karen Smith at 318-555-6789 — she has reliable service and will relay.”



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SECTION 2 | DURING A DISASTER — WHAT TO DO

The Two Rules That Matter Most

RULE #1: Check in with your rescue coordinator every 24 hours. Even a 5-word text — “All safe, staying put” — is enough. Silence means something is wrong. Communicate even if everything is fine.

RULE #2: You are not expected to be a hero. Your job is to keep the animals in your care safe — not to rescue the whole neighborhood.

If You Are Sheltering in Place

- Keep all animals inside and contained — storms and floods disorient animals
- Check food, water, and medications once every 12 hours
- Keep your phone charged — use airplane mode if battery is low, check in periodically
- Do NOT take in additional animals from neighbors unless your coordinator approves
- Report any animal injuries, escapes, or medical concerns to your coordinator immediately
- If power goes out: dogs and cats can tolerate heat up to ~85°F for a day — above that, find shade, wet towels, and ventilation

If You Are Evacuating

- Load animals in carriers/crates FIRST — before loading your personal items
- Bring your full 72-hour kit — do not assume you can buy supplies at your destination
- Text your coordinator BEFORE leaving: “Evacuating to [location] with [# animals]. ETA [time].”
- Keep animals in carriers at your destination until the space is secure
- If an animal escapes: notify coordinator immediately and post on local lost pet social media groups

Foster Capacity Rules — Know Your Limits

These are your personal capacity triggers as a foster. They protect you AND the animals in your care.

- If you are at your normal capacity: do NOT accept additional animals.
- If supplies are running low (less than 2 days remaining): notify coordinator immediately.
- If you cannot evacuate safely with all current animals: call coordinator now — not after.
- If any animal shows medical distress: call coordinator and then call a vet. Don’t wait.



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If You Have to Leave Animals Behind

This is a last resort only. If circumstances absolutely require it:

- Leave 72+ hours of food and water — spread across multiple containers
- Leave a second water source in case the first tips over
- Leave interior doors open so animals can move to safer areas
- Leave a note on your front door: “[#] dogs, [#] cats inside — Rescue contact: [phone]”
- Notify your rescue coordinator BEFORE you leave — not after
- Return as soon as humanly possible

SECTION 3 | AFTER A DISASTER — RECOVERY

Recovery takes longer than people expect. Be patient with yourself, your animals, and your rescue.

- Wait for your rescue coordinator to confirm it's safe to return before going home
- Inspect your home for hazards before bringing animals back inside: gas smell, structural damage, standing water
- Watch animals closely for stress signs in the first week after a disaster
- Let your coordinator know if you need foster relief, replacement supplies, or veterinary follow-up
- Do not accept new foster animals until you are fully restocked and recovered

Watch for Disaster Stress in Animals

Disaster stress affects animals just like it affects people. Common signs in the days and weeks after:

- Refusing food for more than 24–48 hours
- Hiding and refusing to come out
- Aggression that wasn't present before
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Excessive panting, pacing, or vocalization
- Clinginess or separation anxiety

These behaviors are normal for 1–2 weeks. If they persist beyond 2 weeks, or if the animal seems in physical distress, contact your rescue coordinator or a vet.



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A Note About Guilt and Stress

Foster families often feel guilt after a disaster — especially if an animal went missing, got injured, or if they had to evacuate without everything going perfectly.

Disasters are hard. You did the best you could with what you had. Imperfect action in a crisis is always better than paralysis.

If you're struggling after a disaster, please reach out to your rescue coordinator. You are valued.

my rescue contact information — fill in and post on your fridge

Rescue organization name:	
My coordinator's name: Sarah Williams	
Coordinator primary phone: 318-555-5555 (cell — text works too)	
Coordinator backup phone: 318-555-4444	
After-hours emergency contact: Tom Rivera, backup coordinator — 318-555-1234	
Rescue email:	
Check-in schedule during disaster: Every 24 hours — even a short text is fine	
Where to bring animals if I can't keep them: Pinecrest Animal Clinic (emergency) or call rescue first	
Neighbor relay backup (if cell fails): Karen Smith, 2 houses east — 318-555-6789	



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ANNEX B | ANNUAL PREPAREDNESS CALENDAR

How To Use This Calendar

Preparedness is not a one-time project — it's a monthly habit. This calendar breaks it into small, manageable tasks so nothing gets forgotten.

Print this calendar and post it in your office. Check off each task as you complete it. You don't need to do everything in one day — spread each month's tasks across the week.

Customize it: Add your own rescue-specific tasks. Add grant deadlines. Add your annual event dates. Make it yours.

month	preparedness tasks (task title + what to do)
JANUARY	• Update foster agreements • Review and re-sign annual foster agreements. Add any new requirements from last year's lessons. • Insurance review • Confirm your rescue's liability insurance is current. Add animal coverage if not already included. • Volunteer roster update • Remove inactive volunteers. Confirm emergency contacts for active volunteers.
FEBRUARY	• Census audit • Compare your animal census to actual foster placements. Fix any discrepancies. • Contact list update • Verify all phone numbers and emails. Remove outdated contacts. • Financial preparedness check • Confirm emergency fund access. Test your donation platform.
MARCH	• Review evacuation routes • Drive your primary and backup evacuation routes. Note road changes, new construction, or seasonal flood areas. • Vehicle inspection • Confirm all rescue vehicles are road-ready. Check tires, fluids, tow capacity. • Crate and carrier audit • Count and inspect all crates. Repair or replace damaged ones before hurricane season.



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07/22/26

PG 20/33

website: bissellpetfoundation.org

email contact: info@bissellpetfoundation.org

APRIL	• Partner rescue contact • Call your mutual aid partners. Confirm agreement is still active. Update contact info. • Transport network check • Contact transport partners. Confirm availability and update protocols. • Vet relationship check • Call your emergency vet. Confirm disaster response arrangement is still in place.
MAY Hurricane season begins June 1.	• Hurricane preparedness review • Full review of evacuation plan, shelter-in-place plan, and supply cache. • Restock supply cache • Food, water, medications, cleaning supplies, crates. Aim for 7-day supply. • Foster network briefing • Brief all fosters on hurricane plan. Distribute updated Foster Disaster Guide. • Generator test • Test generator under load. Service if needed. Fuel stored safely?
JUNE	• Update animal census • Full census update before peak hurricane season. Print a copy. Send digital to backup. • Communication system test • Send a test message through your group chat system. Confirm all fosters received it. • Activation checklist review • Walk through the Disaster Activation Checklist with your backup coordinator.
JULY	• Mid-season supply check • Have you used any supplies since May? Restock anything below 7-day threshold. • Extreme heat protocol check • Do you have a plan for animals during extended power outages in heat? Review it. • Foster home check-in • Informal check-in with all active foster homes. Any concerns or changes?
AUGUST	• Peak hurricane season review • August–October is highest risk. Confirm all plans are current. • Backup coordinator availability • Is your backup coordinator available this month? Confirm contact info. • Social media admin check • Who can post on your behalf if you are unavailable? Confirm login access.



SEPTEMBER	• Communication system test #2 • Second annual test of your group messaging system. Confirm all contacts active. • Donation platform test • Process a \$1 test donation to confirm your platform is working. • After-action review (if applicable) • If you had a disaster this season, complete your formal debrief and update plans.
OCTOBER	• Hurricane season wind-down • Season ends November 30. Begin transitioning to winter preparedness focus. • Expense tracker close-out • If you had disaster expenses this year, finalize documentation for grant applications. • Foster network thank-you • Send a formal thank-you to your foster network. Retention matters.
NOVEMBER	• Restock supply cache — winter • Swap summer supplies (cooling mats) for winter (heat packs, extra blankets). • Severe weather review • Review tornado, ice storm, and extreme cold protocols for your region. • Annual census archive • Archive this year's census and create a fresh one for next year.
DECEMBER	• Full plan review • Annual review of all four core plans: census, communication, evacuation, shelter-in-place. • Mutual aid agreement renewals • Contact all mutual aid partners to renew agreements for next year. • Scorecard reassessment • Retake the Rescue Resilience Scorecard from the Playbook. Measure your improvement. • Year-end donor communication • Year-end giving appeal. Mention disaster preparedness as a program if applicable.

Bonus Task — Any Month:

After any disaster event, complete a debrief within 30 days.

WRITE DOWN: What worked? What failed? What will you change? Update your plans.



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ANNEX C | FOSTER HOME PROFILE SHEET

How To Use This Form

Complete one profile for each foster household. Update whenever household circumstances change (new address, new vehicle, new animals). Keep a copy at your rescue AND give a copy to the foster.

household identification

Foster's full name:

Mary & Tom Jones

Street address:

123 County Road 14, Alexandria, LA 71301

Parish / County:

Rapides Parish, Louisiana

Primary phone:

318-555-5555 (cell — best number in a disaster)

Backup phone:

318-555-4444 (Tom's cell)

Email address:

tom@gmail.com

Best contact method in disaster:

Text — cell service is more reliable than calls here

animals currently in foster care

Number of dogs:

Number of cats:

Other animals:

Animal names (from census):

Biscuit (dog), Luna (cat), Peanut (dog)

Any animals with medical needs:

Biscuit — daily Apoquel. Luna — no special needs.



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household members & accessibility

Adults in household: 2 adults	
Children in household: 2 children (ages 8 and 12)	
Anyone with mobility or medical needs: No / Yes — describe: ____	
Pets of their own (species + count): 1 personal dog, 2 personal cats	

transportation capability

Vehicles available: 2015 Ford F-150 truck + 2019 Toyota Camry	
Number of animals vehicle can carry: Truck: 8 crates. Camry: 4 small carriers.	
Trailer available? Yes — 16-ft livestock trailer, can hold 20 crates	
Maximum driving distance (disaster): Can drive up to 4 hours / Cannot leave parish	
Fuel limitation notes: Truck has 3/4 tank. Will refuel when watch issued.	

evacuation plan

Primary evacuation destination: Jones Family Farm, 456 Hwy 28, Pineville, LA. Contact: Bill Jones, 318-555-1234. Accepts 10 dogs.	
Secondary evacuation destination: Motel 6, Natchitoches — called ahead, pet-friendly	
Will call rescue before evacuating? Yes / No — expected: always Yes	
Evacuation trigger: Mandatory order for Rapides Parish OR rescue coordinator says go	
Estimated time to evacuate once decided: 2 hours	



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infrastructure & preparedness

Generator available? Yes — 5,500W generator, fueled, tested March 2025	
Water storage on hand? 20 gallons stored in garage	
72-hour supply kit ready? Yes / No / Partial — describe what's missing	
Internet / cell service reliability: Good / Spotty in storms / No landline	
Backup communication method: Neighbor relay — Karen at 318-555-6789 will relay messages if cell fails	

emergency contacts & notes

Out-of-area emergency contact: Sister in Shreveport — Sandra Jones, 318-555-9999	
Local neighbor who can assist: Karen Smith, 2 houses east, 318-555-6789	
Veterinarian name + phone: Pinecrest Animal Clinic — Dr. Mills, 318-555-2222	
Any special notes for this household: Has a private well — water available during power outages	
Date profile last updated:	
Updated by:	



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ANNEX D | MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

About This Agreement

This template creates a simple, plain-language mutual aid agreement between two animal rescue organizations. Complete one agreement with each partner rescue.

This is NOT a legal contract. It is a planning document that establishes shared expectations before a disaster. Both organizations should keep a signed copy.

TIP: Complete this during a calm period — not during a disaster. A phone call to discuss and then email exchange of signed PDFs is fine.

Mutual Aid Agreement — Animal Rescue Organizations

organization information

Organization A (requesting rescue): Legal name of your rescue	
Organization A contact name: Name + title	
Organization A phone:	
Organization A email:	
Organization A address:	
Organization B (partner rescue): Legal name of partner rescue	
Organization B contact name: Name + title	
Organization B phone:	
Organization B email:	
Organization B address:	
Date of agreement:	
Review/renewal date: Annually — January each year	

1. Purpose

This agreement establishes expectations between the two organizations listed above for providing mutual assistance during a disaster or emergency that affects animal rescue operations.

Both organizations agree to make a good-faith effort to assist each other within the limits of their available capacity, personnel, and resources.

2. Temporary Animal Housing

housing terms	
Maximum animals Org B can receive from Org A: Up to 10 dogs or 15 cats at one time	
Species accepted: Dogs and cats only / no livestock	
Duration of temporary housing: Up to 14 days, extendable by mutual agreement	
Medical animals accepted? Yes, if stable and meds are provided / No — healthy only	
Who provides food and supplies? Requesting rescue provides 7-day supply. Partner provides after that.	
Cost/reimbursement for housing: No charge for first 7 days. \$5/animal/day after that.	



3. Transportation Assistance

transport terms

Can Org B provide transport drivers? Yes / No / Situational	
Maximum distance Org B will transport: Up to 2 hours one-way	
Advance notice required for transport request: 6 hours minimum when possible	
Who covers fuel costs? Requesting rescue reimburses fuel within 30 days	
Driver liability: Each organization responsible for its own drivers	

4. Supply sharing

supply sharing terms

Food sharing: Org B can provide up to 50 lbs dry food per request	
Medication support: No sharing of prescription medications	
Crate/equipment loans: Up to 10 crates, returned within 30 days of disaster end	
Reimbursement for supplies: Requesting rescue reimburses cost within 60 days	



5. Veterinary Support

veterinary terms

Vet referral sharing: Org B will share contact with their emergency vet	
Emergency vet cost responsibility: Each organization pays for its own animals	
Triage support at Org B facility: Available if Org B vet partner agrees — pre-arrange	

6. Activation And Communication

how to activate this agreement

How to request assistance: Call the contact listed above. State: rescue name, nature of need, number of animals, urgency.	
Minimum notice for non-emergency requests: 24 hours when possible	
Right to decline assistance: Either organization may decline if at capacity or also affected by the disaster. No explanation required.	
Communication during disaster: Text preferred. Check in within 24 hours of initial request.	

By signing below, both organizations agree to make a good-faith effort to fulfill this agreement during disasters and emergencies, within the limits of their capacity.

This agreement may be modified or terminated by either party with 30 days written notice during non-disaster periods.

	organization a	organization b
Authorized Signature:		
Printed Name:		
Title:		
Date:		

ANNEX E | MANAGING UNPLANNED VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS

The Two-Sided Problem

During a disaster, your rescue may suddenly receive more volunteers and donated supplies than you can use — or than are actually helpful. This is called Spontaneous Volunteer and Unsolicited Donation (SUV) convergence, and it can overwhelm a small rescue just as much as a shortage.

This guide helps you manage the surge while staying focused on your animals.

PART 1 | MANAGING SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

The Two Rules That Matter Most

WHY UNMANAGED VOLUNTEERS CREATE PROBLEMS

- Untrained volunteers can inadvertently harm animals — especially stressed disaster animals
- They consume your time when you need to focus on operations
- They may share misleading information publicly about your rescue
- Liability exposure increases when you have unknown people on-site

The Golden Rule for Volunteers

RULE: No unannounced volunteer should have direct animal contact without orientation. Period.

“We’d love your help — please text first at [number] so we can put you to work safely.”

This single sentence, posted publicly, reduces 80% of the problem.

Volunteer Tiers — Match Task to Experience Level

volunteer tier	who they are	who they are appropriate tasks	not appropriate
Tier 1: Known volunteers	Regular volunteers, known fosters	Direct animal care, transport, medical support	Nothing restricted
Tier 2: Vetted walk-ins	New volunteers who have been oriented (15 min briefing)	Supply handling, cleaning, laundry, food prep	Direct animal handling without supervision
Tier 3: Unvetted public	Showed up unannounced, no prior relationship	Drop-off of supplies, social media tasks, off-site errands	No on-site animal contact

Volunteer Orientation — 15-Minute Briefing Script

Before ANY new volunteer begins work, one person delivers this briefing:

1. Thank them for coming.
2. “Our animals are stressed right now. Here’s what that means for how we work around them: [describe behavior expectations — no loud voices, approach slowly, ask before picking up any animal]”
3. “Your job today is [specific task]. If you’re not sure, stop and ask me — don’t improvise.”
4. “Do not post photos of our animals or our facility on social media without asking first.”
5. “If you are bitten or injured, tell me immediately.”
6. “Thank you — you are making a real difference today.”

volunteer intake log (keep on a clipboard at your entrance)

Volunteer name:	
Date:	
Phone number:	
How did they hear about us?	
Tier assigned (1/2/3):	
Tasks assigned:	
Orientation completed? Yes / No — by whom:	

PART 2 | MANAGING DONATED SUPPLIES**The Convergence Problem**

- After a visible disaster, donations can arrive faster than you can sort and store them
- Donated food may not be appropriate for your animals (wrong species, wrong diet)
- Donated items may require storage space you don't have
- You may receive duplicate items while missing critical needs

Create a Public Needs List — Update It Constantly

Post a specific list of what you need and what you don't need. Update it every 24–48 hours during a disaster.

Example Public Needs Post**We need (as of [date/time]):**

- [specific brand] dry dog food — 25 lb bags
- Bleach (unscented)
- Paper towels
- Gift cards to Tractor Supply or Chewy

We do not need right now:

- Used bedding or towels — we have more than we can use
- Canned dog food — fully stocked
- Clothing (we are an animal rescue, not a people shelter)

Drop-off: [Address], [Hours] **SHIP TO:** [Address]



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Managing Excess Donated Supplies

- Designate ONE person as the supplies manager — all donations go through them
- Set a capacity limit: “We can store up to [X] bags of dog food. After that, redirect to [partner org]”
- Identify a partner rescue or food bank to receive overflow BEFORE the disaster
- Do not accept perishable donations you cannot use within their expiration window
- Log all significant donations for your expense tracker — donated goods are reportable for grants

donation intake log (track significant donations only)

Date received:	
Donor name (if given):	
Items donated: Description + quantity	
Estimated value:	
Accepted / Redirected: If redirected: where?	
Thank-you sent? Yes / No / Method:	

Planning Ahead

FINAL WORD ON CONVERGENCE

The best time to build systems for managing volunteers and donations is before a disaster — not during one. Identify your overflow partner, write your volunteer orientation script, and create a supply capacity limit now. Post them where your team can find them in five seconds.

You are not responsible for absorbing every act of generosity your community offers. Redirect what you can't use. That is good stewardship, not ingratitude.