



THE DEMHS ADVISOR

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(860) 256-0800 • www.ct.gov/demhs

Vol. 2 Issue 11

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"Pet's Act"

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WHAT'S NEW:

**November is National
Child Safety &
Protection Month**

UPCOMING TRAINING and EXERCISES

**Nov 7 & 8- ICS100 & IS700-
CCSU, New Britain**

Nov 9—IS700- Plainville

Nov 14- ICS-300—Tolland

**Dec 4-13—Crime Prev. &
Counter-Terrorism, POSTC**

Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

This month the DEMHS Advisor is focusing on "Community Awareness." We begin with an excellent article by Dr. Arnold Goldman, DVM, MS who has taken the leadership position on the issue of caring for pets during a disaster well before the tragedy of Katrina.

Dr. Goldman has been working with other Veterinarians on the Connecticut State Animal Response Team (CTSART). They are working hard with the assistance of both veterinarians and volunteers to have an animal rescue team in each one of the five DEMHS regions. Recently President Bush signed into law, H.R. 3858, "Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006". This newsletter demonstrates the outstanding training that has taken place to date on animal rescues. Clearly more has to be done, but because of Dr. Goldman and others, Connecticut is definitely moving in the right direction, well ahead of most other states.

Another feature this month are the photos of the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training Weekend held this past September. This coupled with the first annual Connecticut Citizen Corp Conference held on October 30th truly demonstrates the outstanding efforts at the local volunteer level of coming together and working collaboratively in emergency situations. Many thanks to everyone who has been involved with this great program, special thanks to Chief Bill Austin, of the West Hartford Fire Department and Sharon Mazzochi for their efforts in making the Connecticut Citizen Corp Program one of the best in the country! Elizabeth DiGregorio, the Acting Director, Office of Community Preparedness, Preparedness Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security made special mention of the outstanding Medical Reserve Corp Program here in Connecticut and how it is so well thought of in Washington, DC.

There is so much going on and we at DEMHS will continue to share whatever we have in order to make the citizens and businesses more aware of what is happening in an ever fast moving and changing field of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

“PETS Act” Passage Demonstrates Wisdom of Existing Connecticut Program

By Arnold L. Goldman DVM, MS
Director, Connecticut State Animal Response Team
Team Leader, Region 3 Animal Response Team
Chair, RESF 11, Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (DEMHS Region 3)

Without fanfare, on Friday October 6, 2006, President Bush signed into law H.R. 3858, the “Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006,” which amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. This legislation promises to have a major impact upon the way in which evacuated people and their companion animals are managed during a disaster as well as reducing the post-event effects of the disaster on impacted families.

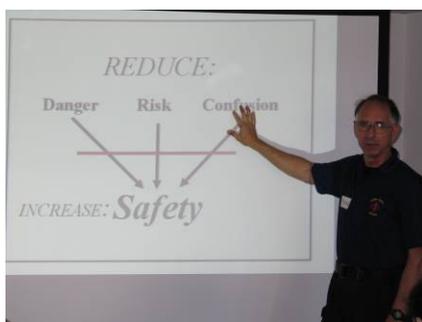
The Act serves to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness operational plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency. What’s more the Act also provides for financial support to states and local authorities for animal emergency preparedness purposes, including “the procurement, construction, leasing or renovating of emergency shelter facilities and materials that will accommodate people with pets and service animals.”

This legislation represents a change in thinking about animals in disasters, but it is not, strictly speaking, an animal welfare bill. It is an adjunctive public safety measure, necessary to ensure the orderly and timely evacuation of citizens with companion and service animals, in the face of oncoming or existing disasters. It represents an acknowledgement that addressing the needs of the animals owned by the citizenry is an essential component of emergency preparedness and must therefore be led by government. Still ahead is the drafting of regulations, which determine the functionality of the act and how it will affect the numerous agencies involved. The National Response Plan’s “Emergency Support Functions”, and in particular, ESF 11, will need to be expanded to include this role and lead agencies at all levels of government and for all functions must be determined. There remains a lot of work yet to do.

For many years, public safety professionals have recognized that people will resist evacuation, if their animals must be left behind to an uncertain fate. Further, most municipal and American Red Cross managed human evacuation shelters had forbade animals for understandable health and safety reasons, but with no resolution for the “Catch-22” created because no viable option existed for those with animals. Since 60% of US families own companion animals and of those that do, there are on average approximately 2.6 companion animals per family, many families end up with conflicted decision-making and no good solutions. All that stands to change with this Acts passage.

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While it is true that, unlike a generation ago, many Americans today regard animals as family members, it is important that everyone recognize that people must come first. It may sound harsh or unfair to some, but that is the only ethical way to approach this matter. It is especially important that the animal care community understands and agrees with this premise for the credibility of the effort to be maintained. People must come first, plain and simple. Resources needed for humans must not and will not be diverted for animals, at the expense of people. I emphasize this because of the often very emotional realm in which animal care professionals exist and because some might question the value or motives of this effort. I re-emphasize then, that companion animal care is an essential component of public safety. Addressing the needs of companion animals takes into account the feelings of people for their animals and eliminates their reason for putting themselves at increased risk to maintain the welfare of their animals.



Furthermore and most significantly, the job of, and risk to, first responders is drastically reduced because that many more people will evacuate when requested to do so, will obey orders not to attempt to return to the evacuated area and therefore will not need further rescue services. A more orderly and safe response and recovery for all will result. Finally, and not insignificantly, the public relations aspect of response and recovery can only be enhanced with the recognition by the public that this issue is addressed. We only need think of the young boy forced to abandon his dog as he boarded a helicopter during Katrina to understand the power of the media in such matters.

In our effort to create a credible animal response capability it became clear early on that engaging the entire state would be necessary to be effective. From each of the five DEMHS Preparedness Regions a veterinarian was recruited from among the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) membership to provide leadership and a bridge among the various entities involved with animals across the state: animal agriculture, animal welfare and biomedical research. Mimicking other states that have counties and county government, we are now working to create five semi-autonomous, Regional units, each to be recruited from, and exist within, one of the Preparedness Regions. These five mutually interdependent Regional Animal Response Teams will together make up the Connecticut State Animal Response Team, CTSART. When deployed these teams will operate under the command and control of government. Between deployments they will exist as a private entity. Training requirements are still evolving and will ultimately depend on credentialing standards recommended at both the federal and state levels.

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CTSART now has over 100 volunteers enlisted, many of whom have professional animal handling experience and who have completed basic ICS and NIMS training. A number of them participated in the Region 3 ART's TLAER Large Animal Rescue training, held over Memorial Day weekend this year. Training held through the Region 3 Animal Response Team was organized and primarily funded by a DHS grant obtained through CREPC. These volunteers were recruited from across the state, and as all five Regional ARTs come on line, I expect the volunteers will reshuffle, to be more closely involved with their proximate Regional teams. In the meantime we are working to develop as much capacity as possible. Thankfully this summer's hurricane season was mild and we were not called to action prematurely. I expect we will be ready for 2007! The next step in Region 3's pilot program is to get a nucleus of our volunteers through CERT training, so they may be officially recognized as Citizen Corps volunteers and will be afforded Title 28 protections in the event of a deployment. Meanwhile, in Region 3, we are amassing equipment appropriate to our mission, including over 750 animal cages and associated equipment, all of which is "trailer-ized" for mobility and rapid deployment purposes. The national SART motto applies "any animal, any disaster, anywhere."

In Region 3 the capability to fulfill our primary mission of companion animal evacuation sheltering, collocated with human evacuation sheltering will be fulfilled once we have our group of volunteers CERT trained and our equipment cache is complete. Region 4's team, led by Dr. Dennis Thibeault, is close on Region 3's heels, having also developed a nucleus of volunteers and proposed an equipment budget to DEMHS. Regions 1, 2 and 5 are not too far behind, awaiting only the further development of their respective REPTs. We have also signed an MOU with the Connecticut Humane Society, our states largest animal welfare organization, such that their volunteers, employees and facilities may become CTSART assets during a deployment.

We are often asked about other related missions such as large animal considerations and unconfined or abandoned animal rescue. Connecticut is estimated to have over 60,000 horses, the largest per capita number among the 50 states. While it is impractical and even unsafe to consider moving large numbers of them to any one place, it is important that their needs be addressed for all the same reasons as we do for the small companion animals, to keep their owners safe. To that end CTSART has partnered with the Connecticut Horse Council to promote an educational program called Horse911, which has as its goal to educate horse owners on shelter-in-place considerations and barn and trailering safety. The same considerations apply to farms and agricultural animals as well.



On the subject of animal rescue, some definition is important. For the tasks of going out and retrieving animals from abandoned homes or retrieving owned or un-owned loose animals, the operational response plan and mission is more complicated and less certain. It really depends on the nature and size of the disaster, to what degree state and regional resources can accomplish this mission. We hope that by creating an effective collocated companion animal evacuation sheltering capability we will have minimized the need for actual rescue operations. Remembering that our primary mission is one based upon public safety considerations, we nevertheless expect in time to develop teams of volunteers, trained and certified through CERT, who can, under the leadership of an animal control officer with jurisdiction in a given area, go out and retrieve displaced or abandoned animals during a disaster. This part of the overall mission is what often attracts volunteers to the effort, as it engenders a bit of drama and glamour, but is really not the primary focus as I have explained above. The need for rescue is what we want to minimize, all in the interest of the public's safety.

All of this is very exciting, and my CVMA colleagues and I feel privileged and honored to have the opportunity to spearhead this effort in partnership with our state government agencies, to make Connecticut safer in times of disaster. Together our volunteers, our partner organizations; the Connecticut Horse Council and the Connecticut Humane Society; and our state and regional government agencies including DEMHS, DoAg and CREPC have provided the support and vision to bring the project to this point. They can all share the pride in what has been accomplished. With the passage of the PETS Act we in Connecticut find ourselves ahead of the curve in public safety, and in animal protection in times of disaster.

For further information about the Regional Animal Response Teams of CTSART please contact Dr. Arnold Goldman at ctsart@ctvet.org



NOAA PUBLIC ALERT RADIOS FOR SCHOOLS



The Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) in cooperation with the National Weather Service (NWS) and our federal agency partners are currently installing NOAA Public Alert Radios in every public school in Connecticut. These radios are part of the DEMHS and SDE continuing effort to provide the best possible warnings to Connecticut's schools in the event of severe weather or other emergencies.

Connecticut was one of the first states to install NOAA Weather Radios in Public Schools, State Parks and 911 Centers in 1992 and 1994. Over 300 radios were installed statewide as a result of a deadly series of tornadoes which occurred on July 10, 1989. The NWS used three existing NOAA Weather Radio Transmitters to provide targeted watches and warnings to specific areas when severe weather threatened Connecticut. In 1999 Connecticut installed a fourth NOAA Weather Radio transmitter in Litchfield County to provide improved warnings for schools, parks and 911 centers in the Northwest Hills.

Although many of the 300 original radios are still in service, these radios are now 15 years old. The newer radios are now known as NOAA Public Alert radios. These radios are being distributed this fall to all public schools and are now capable of providing civil emergency, hazardous materials, and missing children alerts in addition to their original weather alerting capabilities.

These radios are being sent directly to the principals of all public schools this fall. If you need assistance in programming your radio, DEMHS regional coordinators are available during regular business hours to assist in programming and testing your new radio (please see map and information on page 5). In addition, DEMHS and SDE have posted links on our websites to programming instructions for each type of radio being distributed. The DEMHS site is www.ct.gov/demhs and the SDE site is <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/>. Assistance is also available from NOAA at <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/proginfo-08.htm>.

The National Weather Service conducts weekly tests of the NOAA Public Alerting system each Wednesday between 11 a.m. and Noon. If your radio does not receive the test alert, please contact your DEMHS Regional Coordinator for assistance.

Funding for this initiative is being provided by the Federal Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Education.



Check Out Town Websites for Information on Preparedness In Your Town

There is some great information to be found on your own town's website. Most municipalities have a web page that can be found by simply typing the town's name into your web browser. Check out your town and see what they have to say. Information on preparedness and emergency procedures is readily available to the public on these sites. To find a listing of all cities and towns in Connecticut paste the address below on your browser and check it out.

<http://www.ct.gov/ctportal/cwp/view.asp?a=843&q=257266>



DEMHS Goes to the Big E

DEMHS staffed a booth at the Big E this year to promote preparedness. Many thanks to all those employees who volunteered to work.

Pictured (left to right) are Bob Christ, Darlene Richards, Doug Glowacki and Deb Arrieta.

Correction:

It has been brought to our attention that last month's newsletter gave the impression that Kerosene heaters were acceptable, *if properly vented*, for use in homes (see October, Vol.2, Issue 10, page 5— "Winter Storms: Safety Tips for Heating Your Home"). This is contradictory to CT General Statute 29-318b as well as some local codes and ordinances. Our thanks to Mr. Marco Palmeri, Public Health Coordinator, Plainville Health Dept. for bringing this to our attention. The online October Newsletter has been corrected.

Upcoming Training & Exercise

Nov 4	ICS-100—East Hartford
Nov 7	ICS-100 and IS-700— CCSU, New Britain
Nov 8	IS-700 (AM & PM classes) - CCSU, New Britain
Nov 9	IS-700 (evening class) - Plainville
Nov 14	ICS-300—Tolland
Nov 15	ICS-100—CCSU, New Britain
Nov 28	ICS-300—Middletown
Dec 4-13	Crime Prevention & Counter-Terrorism (8 days) - POSTC
Dec 13	Anti-Terrorism Training (formerly SLATT) — POSTC

For training and exercise questions please contact Bob Christ at 860-706-5519, Bob Scata at 860-706-5518, or Sharon Mazzochi at 860-706-5517.

Training is critical for first responders and is readily available through the State Fire Academy, Regional Fire Schools, and the Police Officers Training Academy. First responders include Police, Fire, Public Works, and 911 dispatchers to name but a few.

All of the following organizations have the ability to deliver **NIMS training** to your police officers, firefighters, public works employees, 911 dispatchers, health workers, education staff and emergency management personnel. Training can be delivered weekdays, weekends or evenings to meet your needs. The NIMS program can be delivered in four, eight or twelve hour modules depending on the duties assigned to personnel.

You should also know that these programs are available on line at FEMA's web site: http://www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

Training Facility Contact Information:

Police Officers Training Council	203-238-6505
Connecticut Fire Academy	860-627-6363
Eastern CT Fireman's Training School	860-487-1105
New Haven Regional Fire Academy	203-946-6215
Wolcott Fire School	203-879-1559
Hartford County Fire School	860-828-3242
Burrville Fire Training School	860-482-7496
Valley Fire Training School	203-736-6222
Middlesex County Fire School	860-663-1308
Fairfield Fireman's Training School	203-254-4709
Stamford Regional Training Fire School	203-977-4673

All State Agencies should contact the Training Unit at DEMHS.

Director Visits Region I Office Meets State Emergency Directors

FEMA Director David Paulison visited the FEMA Region I Office in Boston on October 20 to talk to staff and meet with emergency management directors from the New England states. An important part of the visit was an all-hands meeting with regional staff that included a question and answer session. The discussion focused on the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 and the director's immediate priority to designate highly-experienced emergency managers as regional directors.

Director Paulison addressed inquiries from the staff on a wide array of topics -- from potential staffing increases throughout the agency to changes in the disaster assistance programs. Both Paulison and Cleaves then met with senior staff to discuss issues of regional importance and later met with state emergency management agency directors from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, along with the executive director of the Northeast States Emergency Consortium. The state directors exchanged many useful ideas about working with FEMA during a disaster.

This is the first time a FEMA director has met with several New England emergency managers at once. Director Paulison encouraged them to be frank about what their disaster needs are and he pledged to work closely with them following a federal disaster declaration.



Photo by Lauren Smith/FEMA

FEMA Director David Paulison and FEMA Region I Director Art Cleaves meet with the state emergency management directors from five of the six New England states. From left: Christopher M. Pope, Director, New Hampshire Department of Fire & Safety Emergency Management; Robert Warren, Executive Director, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency; James "Skip" Thomas, Commissioner, Connecticut Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security; Ed Fratto, Executive Director, Northeast States Emergency Consortium; Charles Jacobs, Acting Director, Maine Emergency Management Agency; David Paulison, FEMA Director; Cristine McCombs, Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency; Art Cleaves, FEMA Region 1 Director.

**CERT Weekend
September 9 & 10, 2006
Windsor Locks**



Emergency Preparedness and the Business Community

By Pam Daniels

In times of emergency, our first thoughts are for our families. But businesses are also families, especially when disaster strikes. Whether it's a hurricane, ice storm, utility overload or an act of terrorism, the power *will* go out. The building may be damaged, employees may be injured, and it may be impossible to leave the workplace for a sustained period of time.

What do you do? Major corporations are required to have emergency preparedness plans in place, but with smaller community businesses, it is a good idea to take the same basic preparedness steps you will take with your family:

1. Prepare a Kit

Have at least three days of supplies stored in an accessible location and clearly marked. The kit should include:

- Water (1 gallon per person per day)
- Food (non-perishable, high protein)
- Flashlight (hand-cranked or alternative energy models are available)
- Batteries of all sizes
- First aid & medications
- Sanitary and personal supplies
- Radio (hand-crank or battery-driven)
- Clothing
- Cash (ATMs will be offline; banks have limited amounts stored)
- Contact information
- Evacuation maps and instructions

2. Make a Plan

- Determine several safe sites within the building that employees may gather
- Identify locations of circuit breakers, water and/or gas lines and when to turn these off
- Prepare simple procedures for employees to follow during the initial emergency as well as the longer-term need to shelter in place. These can include instructions on the use of kitchen and bathroom facilities, when and how to call family members, distribution of food and water, etc.
- Inform employees of the plan
- Practice sheltering in place procedures as well as evacuation protocols
- Post emergency phone numbers (police, fire, emergency medical) clearly and in several strategic locations.

3. Be Informed

- Learn what emergencies are likely to occur in your geographic area
- Learn how local authorities will notify you during a disaster, how you will obtain critical information (local radio, NOAA weather radios or channels)
- Learn evacuation routes and shelter locations.
- Learn how to prepare. This can include having employees learn basic first aid, CPR and other emergency preparedness skills.
- Conduct regular employee meetings, include regular preparedness information in company newsletters, bulletins or email notices to keep awareness high.

Businesses are critical members of the community, and the community is also family. Be prepared.

A Message from the Nation Weather Service

This year, the National Weather Service will join the State of NY and promote Winter Preparedness from Sunday, October 29th through Saturday, November 4th, following this early weekend's storm.

For the latest information on winter weather, including NOAA's latest seasonal Winter Weather Outlook, visit our Winter Weather Web Page:

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/okx/winterweather.html>

This web page contains many useful links for promoting the education and preparedness for the hazardous weather that winter will bring.

We will be issuing and broadcasting Public Information Statements once daily starting Sunday, October 29th, using this schedule:

Sun. 10/29 - Announcement of Winter Weather Preparedness Week @ 5 am.

Mon. 10/30 - Winter Weather Preparedness @ 5 am.

Tue. 10/31 - Heavy Snow @ 5 am.

Wed. 11/01 - Ice Storms @ 5 am.

Thu. 11/02 - Winter Floods @ 5 am.

Fri. 11/03 - Watch, Warning, and Advisory Criteria @ 5 am.

Sat. 11/04 - Winter Weather Preparedness @ 5 am.

If you'd like additional information, please contact Gary Conte, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist at (631) 924-0593 ext. 223. If you receive media requests for news stories, please direct them to the winter weather web page.

We hope you take advantage of this information to help the NWS in spreading winter weather safety tips throughout our local communities.