

Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services

After Action Report Improvement Plan

VTTX Disaster Animal Shelter Management (Ag-Based)



**6/27/2016
FINAL**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services participated in a Disaster Animal Shelter Management (Ag-Based) Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) that is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), Emergency Management Institute (EMI) as one of a series of virtual exercises designed to bring numerous communities together in a collaborative environment. This After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) follows guidance set forth by the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

The nearly four-hour, facilitator-led discussion touched the core capabilities of planning, public information and warning; critical transportation; operational coordination; Mass Care Services; situational assessment and economic recovery. This AAR/IP summarizes the success of the exercise in meeting its goals.

Several strengths were noted in the County's understanding and performance of emergency procedures and roles. There were also several areas that could be improved based on the gaps, challenges, and recommended actions identified in the VTTX. These identified areas of improvement provided a basis of recommending a series of corrective actions or assignments in Appendix A. Improvement areas include. Actions included coordinated training, plan review, and outreach to external partners.

A list of workshop participants can be found in Appendix B.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) - Disaster Animal Shelter Management (Ag-Based)
Exercise Dates	June 23, 2016 8:00 am – 1:00 pm
Scope	This is a discussion-based exercise, planned for four hours hosted by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and conducted with multiple remote Video Teleconference sites including Sacramento County.
Mission Area(s)	Mitigation, Response and Recovery
Core Capabilities	Planning, Public Information and Warning; Critical Transportation; Operational Coordination; Mass Care Services; Situational Assessment and Economic Recovery
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance participants’ knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively conduct all-hazards emergency response and recovery. • Enable participants to better coordinate response operations with counterparts from Federal agencies, state governments, local governments, private sector organizations, and nongovernmental agencies. • Allow participating locations to share real-time disaster animal shelter management related preparation, response and recovery solutions with all participants.
Threat or Hazard	Agriculture
Scenario	The Disaster Animal Shelter Management VTTX was designed around the realistic scenario of an animal based evacuation and shelter situation, which causes significant actions, by the participating jurisdictions and agencies.
Sponsor	Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services
Grant	No grant funds were allocated
Participating Organizations	A VTTX sign-in sheet is attached in Appendix B.
Point of Contact	Mary Jo Flynn, MS, CEM Emergency Operations Coordinator Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services flynnm@sacoes.org (916) 874-4671 office; (916) 508-5131 cell

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performance
Assist participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively conduct all-hazards emergency response and recovery.	Planning, Public Information and Warning; Critical Transportation; Operational Coordination; Mass Care Services; Situational Assessment and Economic Recovery	P
Enable participants to better coordinate response operations with counterparts from Federal agencies, state governments, local governments, private sector organizations, and nongovernmental agencies.	Planning	P
Allow participating locations to share real-time disaster animal shelter management related preparation, response and recovery solutions with all participants	Operational Coordination; Mass Care Services; Situational Assessment	P
<p>Ratings Definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws; however, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified. Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s). 		

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Core Capability: Planning

Objectives:

- Assist participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively conduct all-hazards emergency response and recovery.
- Enable participants to better coordinate response operations with counterparts from Federal agencies, state governments, local governments, private sector organizations, and nongovernmental agencies.
- Allow participating locations to share real-time disaster animal shelter management related preparation, response and recovery solutions with all participants.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Strengths

The structure of the exercise focused on a multimedia, facilitated format for the national players as well as Sacramento County. Time was given to review each module and then answer discussion questions with guidance from the onsite moderator. Sacramento County participants discussed all of the questions internally and then provided an out brief of our top three considerations for each module rather than answering all of the questions back to the vast group of participants in the interest of time. Our key strengths are highlighted and summarized below from each of the three modules.

Top three strengths:

1. Participation in VTTX nationally continues to be a good opportunity for Sacramento County to exercise with other agencies across the country. Much discussion revolved around the need for the County to take this format to the City level and duplicate this so that the Cities and their partners participate at a more local level.
2. The exercise highlighted the depth of resources, skill sets and trained personnel internal to Sacramento County (including the cities) to handle an animal sheltering event.
3. The VTTX identified the capabilities of our partners and department personnel to respond to an animal shelter event in Sacramento County and highlighted the existing partnership and ongoing emergency management coordination efforts with other local and county departments/agencies.

Areas for Improvement

Sacramento County participants altered the scenarios to fit their needs to ensure valuable learning for all and discussed the effects of an urban-grassland interface fire, which was a realistic scenario for the group. Additionally, southern Sacramento County has had recent small fires over the last several years and possible response actions associated with that event were evaluated for future more severe wildfire events.

Top three areas for improvement:

1. Convene the functional group involved in animal/agricultural response in Sacramento County on a more regular basis for pre event coordination/planning.
2. Animal Response Annex needs to be updated and vetted through functional Animal Response Group in Sacramento County.
3. Update contact lists and phone trees internal to each department represented on the Animal Response Group in Sacramento County to use in case of an animal shelter response.

Analysis:

Overall participants expressed satisfaction with the exercise. There was total agreement by all participants that both the Animal Response Annex and the individual departmental SOPs and contact information needs to be documented accordingly due to attrition in the local governments and the county itself. Additionally, the group expressed an interest in convening at least quarterly to plan and prepare for an animal shelter event in Sacramento County.

Participant Survey

Participants were asked to rank elements of the exercise on a five-point scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement. All participants (N=6) participated in the survey.

The exercise was well structured and organized	4.7
The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic	4.9
The facilitator(s) was knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target, and was sensitive to group dynamics	4.8
The situation manual used during the exercise was a valuable tool throughout the exercise.	4.7
Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position	4.8
The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines	4.8

What changes would you make to this exercise? Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

- Great experience: Valuable dialogue and safe environment to brainstorm. Incredibly knowledgeable group and very glad I was able to represent for Public Health. Thank you!
- Report back should be more focused. Participants should be encouraged to say "ditto" and only add new information. Always great to hear from other jurisdictions.
- Include additional shelters (animal), Humane Societies, SSPCA-so all would be somewhat on the same page.

- Make sure IT connection is working prior to exercise. Great job.
- Need to take it to the troops in the field.
- Need to expand invite to all local jurisdictions with response capabilities, as well as partnering agencies-so we are all on the same page and people are aware of the process.
- This exercise was very helpful to me. It was beneficial to meet individuals that would be involved in the process.
- When South Carolina spoke way too long, the coordinator should have interrupted and let him know to wrap it up. Otherwise it was really great, very helpful. Better explanation of how to get to the room the training was held in. I had the address and that was it. Luckily I found a nice stranger to help me get inside the compound and into the building and together we found the room.
- For the sake of time, the group of participants from Sacramento County thought that calling out agencies to speak to their top 3 points from the discussion questions would help in keeping the attention for the other groups across the country, the questions should be summarized rather than all answered in detail.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Sacramento County as a result of the Disaster Animal Shelter Management VTTX. All corrective actions are entered into WebEOC for tracking over time.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Core Capability 1: Planning; Public Information and Warning; Critical Transportation; Operational Coordination; Mass Care Services; Situational Assessment and Economic Recovery	Convene Animal Planning Group	Begin regular meetings of the animal response group in Sacramento County	Planning; Operational Coordination; Mass Care Services; Situational Assessment	Animal Care and Regulation/Sac OES	Eileen Matson/M.Flynn		
	Update Sacramento County Animal Response Annex	The prior Animal Response Annex is out of date and is need of a full update	Planning	Sac OES	M. Flynn		
	Update contact lists and notification lists	Each department with a role needs to annually update their own notification and contact lists	Planning; Information and Warning	Sac OES/each Department Coordinator	M. Flynn/each Department POC		

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.