Animal Rescue Operations

Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Encourages community involvement in rescue and rehabilitation efforts. | Increases public awareness of animal rights and ethical treatment. | Offers training for emergency responders on handling animal-related incidents. | Provides medical care and rehabilitation for rescued animals. | Saves injured, neglected, or abandoned animals, improving their welfare. | Supports law enforcement efforts in cases of animal abuse and neglect.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Aggressive stray or feral animals	Bites, attacks, infections	Increases the ability to safely rescue and rehabilitate animals that might otherwise pose a risk to handlers.	Provide training on the behavior of feral animals and safe capture techniques. Utilize humane traps or sedation under veterinary supervision when necessary. Establish protocols for assessing aggression levels before attempting direct handling. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Animal bites	Bites, puncture wounds, infection	Enables the rescue of animals in distress, improving their welfare and chances of rehabilitation.	Provide rescuers with training on animal behavior to recognize warning signs of aggression. Equip them with appropriate protective gear, such as gloves and bite-resistant clothing. Implement protocols for safe animal handling and restraint to minimize stress-induced aggression. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Animal-inflicted injuries (kicks, scratches)	Bruises, lacerations, fractures	Facilitates the safe handling of animals, ensuring their rescue and reducing suffering.	Train rescuers in species-specific handling techniques to reduce the likelihood of defensive behaviors. Use appropriate restraint tools, like catch poles or nets, to maintain a safe distance when necessary. Regularly assess and maintain equipment to ensure its reliability during operations. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Confined space entry	Asphyxiation, entrapment, falls	Allows for the rescue of animals trapped in confined spaces, increasing the number of animals that can be saved.	Train personnel in confined space entry procedures, including hazard recognition and emergency response. Use gas detectors to monitor air quality in confined spaces. Implement a permit system to control and document entry into such areas. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Panic responses from rescued animals	Sudden movements, bites, injuries to rescuers or animals	Ensures that distressed animals can be transported safely without harming themselves or rescuers.	Minimize handling stress by using calming techniques such as covering cages or reducing noise. Train rescuers to identify signs of panic and respond appropriately. Use sedation under veterinary guidance if necessary for highly distressed animals. **(ALL)**	Rescuers, rescued animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Allergic reactions	Skin irritation, respiratory distress, anaphylaxis	Allows individuals with manageable allergies to participate in rescue operations, increasing available manpower.	Identify personnel with known allergies to specific animals or environments. Provide access to medical supplies, such as antihistamines or epinephrine auto-injectors. Develop emergency response plans for allergic reactions, including rapid evacuation procedures. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Chemical exposure	Respiratory issues, skin burns, poisoning	Allows rescues in environments where chemicals are present, broadening the scope of operations.	Identify potential chemical hazards in the rescue environment, such as pesticides or cleaning agents. Provide appropriate PPE, including gloves and respirators, to personnel. Train team members on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous substances. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Cold exposure	Hypothermia, frostbite, reduced dexterity	Ensures personnel can operate effectively in cold conditions, enabling timely animal rescues.	Provide appropriate cold-weather clothing and gear to personnel. Implement warming stations or shelters in the field. Educate team members on recognizing symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite, and establish protocols for immediate response. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Electrical hazards	Electrocution, burns, equipment failure	Ensures rescuer safety in environments with electrical risks, facilitating animal rescue in diverse settings.	Identify and de-energize electrical sources before commencing rescue operations. Use insulated tools and equipment when working near electrical hazards. Train personnel on electrical safety protocols and emergency response procedures. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Entrapment in unstable terrain	Sinking in mud, landslides, debris entrapment	Allows rescues in diverse environments, including disaster-stricken or remote locations, improving animal welfare.	Assess ground conditions before entry, particularly in mud, sand, or unstable debris. Equip rescuers with ropes, harnesses, and ground stabilization tools. Implement a buddy system and emergency extraction protocols. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Exposure to hazardous waste	Chemical burns, poisoning, respiratory illness	Enables rescues in environments where animals may be trapped near hazardous waste, improving survival chances.	Conduct environmental assessments to identify contamination risks before initiating rescues. Provide PPE such as gloves, masks, and protective suits where necessary. Train personnel on proper decontamination procedures after exposure. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Falling objects	Head injuries, fractures, lacerations	Ensures personnel safety while allowing rescue operations in unstable environments where animals may be trapped.	Conduct thorough site assessments to identify potential falling hazards such as loose debris or unstable structures. Require personnel to wear helmets and other protective gear in areas where falling objects are a risk. Implement exclusion zones and secure overhead hazards where possible. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Fatigue from long rescue operations	Decreased reaction time, increased risk of mistakes, exhaustion	Maintains the efficiency and well-being of rescuers, allowing operations to continue for extended periods.	Implement shift rotations to prevent exhaustion and maintain alertness. Encourage regular hydration and rest breaks. Monitor personnel for signs of fatigue-related impairment and ensure support is available if needed. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Fire and explosion	Burns, smoke inhalation, structural collapse	Enables rescues in environments with fire risks, potentially saving animals from life-threatening situations.	Identify flammable materials and potential ignition sources in the rescue area. Equip personnel with fire-resistant clothing and firefighting equipment. Develop and communicate evacuation routes and procedures in case of fire. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Food and water contamination	Foodborne illness, dehydration, poisoning	Helps sustain rescued animals until they can be transferred to rehabilitation centers or released safely.	Ensure that all food and water sources provided to rescued animals are fresh and free from contamination. Store supplies in sealed containers to prevent spoilage or exposure to toxins. Regularly inspect and clean feeding equipment. **(ALL)**	Rescued animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Heat stress	Dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke	Maintains the health and efficiency of the rescue team during operations in hot environments.	Schedule operations during cooler parts of the day when possible. Ensure availability of shaded rest areas and ample hydration for personnel. Monitor team members for signs of heat-related illnesses and rotate duties to prevent overexertion. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Heavy lifting injuries	Muscle strains, back injuries, fractures	Allows the safe transport of animals in need of medical attention without compromising the health of rescuers.	Provide manual handling training to teach proper lifting techniques and reduce strain injuries. Use mechanical aids such as stretchers, slings, or lifting harnesses to assist with heavy loads. Ensure team lifting procedures are followed for large or struggling animals. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Hostile public interference	Physical assault, verbal threats, obstruction	Ensures that rescues can be conducted safely even in emotionally charged or contentious situations.	Train personnel in conflict de-escalation techniques to manage confrontational situations. Establish clear procedures for involving law enforcement or security when necessary. Provide identification badges or uniforms to distinguish authorized rescuers. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Lack of communication in remote areas	Delayed emergency response, lost personnel, inability to call for assistance	Expands rescue operations into isolated areas where animals might otherwise be left stranded.	Equip teams with satellite phones, radios, or GPS tracking devices when operating in remote locations. Establish check-in protocols to maintain contact with a base team. Train personnel on emergency signal methods if communication devices fail. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Lack of emergency medical support	Delayed treatment, worsened injuries, fatalities	Allows rescues to be conducted even in areas where medical support is limited, increasing survival rates for both rescuers and animals.	Ensure that all personnel are trained in first aid and CPR. Carry first aid kits with supplies for both humans and animals. Establish emergency transport plans to quickly move injured personnel or animals to medical facilities. **(ALL)**	Rescuers, rescued animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Legal and ethical considerations	Violations of wildlife laws, unauthorized rescues, liability issues	Builds credibility and trust in the rescue organization while ensuring compliance with legal frameworks.	Ensure that all rescue operations comply with local wildlife protection laws and ethical guidelines. Obtain necessary permits and coordinate with relevant authorities when needed. Train personnel on ethical considerations related to animal welfare. **(ALL)**	Rescuers, organization	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Noise-induced hearing loss	Hearing impairment, tinnitus, communication difficulties	Protects personnel's hearing health, allowing them to continue participating in rescue operations.	Equip personnel with hearing protection devices in high-noise environments. Monitor noise levels and implement engineering controls to reduce exposure when possible. Schedule regular hearing assessments for team members to detect early signs of hearing loss. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Sharp objects and debris	Puncture wounds, infections, lacerations	Allows rescues in hazardous environments, such as disaster zones, increasing the number of animals that can be saved.	Conduct a site sweep to identify sharp objects, broken glass, or metal fragments. Provide protective clothing and gloves to personnel. Implement safe handling procedures when clearing debris to avoid puncture injuries. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Slips, trips, and falls	Sprains, fractures, head injuries	Reduces the risk of injury to personnel, ensuring the continuity of rescue operations.	Conduct site assessments to identify and mark hazardous areas. Equip personnel with appropriate footwear that provides traction suitable for the terrain. Maintain clear communication about site-specific dangers and enforce the use of safety harnesses in high-risk areas. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Structural collapse	Crushing injuries, entrapment, fatalities	Allows for safe operations in compromised structures, enabling the rescue of animals in disaster scenarios.	Assess the stability of structures before entry and continuously monitor for signs of collapse. Use shoring and bracing techniques to support unstable structures. Establish evacuation plans and conduct regular drills to prepare for potential collapses. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Vehicle accidents	Collisions, injuries, damage to equipment	Facilitates the safe and efficient transport of animals and personnel during rescues.	Ensure all drivers are trained and certified for operating rescue vehicles. Perform regular maintenance checks on all vehicles to ensure they are in safe working condition. Establish protocols for safe driving practices, including speed limits and the use of seat belts. **(ALL)**	Rescuers, transported animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Venomous bites or stings	Severe allergic reactions, paralysis, fatalities	Allows the safe rescue of animals in regions with venomous species, expanding the scope of rescue efforts.	Train personnel to identify venomous species and their habitats to avoid unnecessary exposure. Equip teams with first aid kits containing antivenom where applicable. Establish clear protocols for treating bites and stings, including emergency evacuation procedures. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Water-related hazards (drowning, hypothermia)	Drowning, cold shock, loss of equipment	Enables safe rescue operations in aquatic environments, expanding the range of animals that can be assisted.	Provide water safety training, including swimming proficiency and rescue techniques. Equip personnel with life vests and thermal protective clothing. Establish protocols for assessing water conditions and using boats or flotation devices when necessary. **(ALL)**	Rescuers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Zoonotic disease transmission	Exposure to diseases, infection, illness	Protects human health while allowing the rescue of animals that may carry transmissible diseases.	Ensure all personnel are educated on zoonotic diseases and their transmission routes. Enforce the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and masks. Establish hygiene protocols, such as handwashing stations and disinfection procedures for equipment and clothing. **(ALL)**	Rescuers, veterinary staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Unpredicted risks	Illness, injury, death		Continuous risk monitoring conducted by all staff. Any unforeseen hazards must be reported promptly to supervisors or management, with immediate corrective action taken as necessary. **(ALL)**	All	**N/A**

NOTES

Extra notes & activity evaluation:

Completed by	Reviewed/Approved by	Risk Assessment Date	Review Required Date