RISK ASSESSMENT WIZARD

Animal Shelters

Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Educates the public on responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. | Increases pet adoption rates by rehabilitating and rehoming rescued animals. | Promotes community involvement through volunteer opportunities and foster programs. | Provides shelter and care for abandoned and stray animals, improving their quality of life. | Supports the reduction of overpopulation through spaying and neutering programs. | Works with law enforcement to prevent animal cruelty and neglect.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Aggressive animal behavior	Bites, scratches, physical injuries	Accepting aggressive or traumatized animals provides them with a second chance, even if handling them poses a risk.	Conduct thorough behavioral assessments upon intake. Develop individualized behavior modification plans and provide staff training on de-escalation techniques. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Animal bites	Bites, puncture wounds, infections	Direct handling of animals is essential for their care, treatment, and rehabilitation, even if there is a risk of bites.	Provide comprehensive training for staff on animal behavior and safe handling techniques. Use appropriate restraint tools when necessary and establish protocols for interacting with aggressive animals. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Allergic reactions	Respiratory distress, skin rashes, anaphylaxis	Working in direct contact with animals enhances their socialization and well-being, despite the risk of allergic reactions.	Identify staff allergies during onboarding and assign duties accordingly. Ensure availability of first aid kits equipped with allergy medications and train staff on their use. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Burnout and mental health issues in staff	Stress, fatigue, reduced job performance, emotional exhaustion	Caring for animals in distress is emotionally taxing but necessary for their well-being.	Implement structured work schedules with mandatory break periods to prevent overwork. Offer access to counseling services, peer support groups, and resilience training for staff. Conduct regular check-ins with employees to assess stress levels and adjust workloads accordingly. **(ALL)**	Staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Chemical exposure	Skin irritation, respiratory issues, poisoning	Using disinfectants and cleaning chemicals ensures a safe and sanitary environment, even if it presents minor exposure risks.	Store chemicals in labeled, secure areas away from animals. Train staff on proper handling, usage, and disposal of chemicals. Use animal-safe cleaning products whenever possible. **(ALL)**	Staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Electrical hazards	Electrical shocks, fires, equipment failures	Using electric-powered equipment like medical devices and heating pads enhances care, even if electrical risks exist.	Regularly inspect electrical systems and equipment for wear or damage. Ensure that cords are secured and out of reach of animals. Train staff on electrical safety protocols. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Ergonomic injuries	Back strain, muscle injuries, repetitive strain injuries	Lifting and moving animals is necessary for their care, even if it increases the risk of strain or injury.	Provide training on proper lifting techniques and supply ergonomic tools for tasks. Encourage staff to take regular breaks and report any discomfort early. **(ALL)**	Staff	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Escaped animals	Animal attacks, road accidents, lost animals	Allowing animals outdoor access for enrichment and exercise improves their welfare, even though escape attempts may occur.	Regularly inspect enclosures and facility perimeters for weaknesses. Train staff on protocols for recapturing escaped animals safely. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, public	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Extreme weather conditions	Structural damage, power loss, animal endangerment	Operating in all seasons allows continuous care, despite the difficulties extreme weather brings.	Weatherproof shelter structures by reinforcing insulation, installing weather-resistant roofing, and securing loose materials. Equip shelters with emergency climate control equipment, such as portable heaters or cooling units. Develop clear contingency plans for evacuations or on-site emergency accommodations. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Fire hazards	Burns, smoke inhalation, structural damage	Having electrical and heating systems allows shelters to provide warmth and lighting for animals, even if it increases fire risks.	Install and regularly maintain smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Develop and practice an emergency evacuation plan, ensuring all staff are familiar with procedures. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers, animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**
Flooding and water damage	Facility damage, loss of supplies, animal displacement	Operating in diverse locations increases rescue capacity, even if some sites are prone to flooding.	Regularly inspect and maintain drainage systems to prevent water accumulation. Store essential supplies in waterproof containers on elevated platforms. Develop a flood response plan with designated safe areas for animals and a system for relocating critical resources if needed. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Food contamination	Spoiled food, illness, digestive issues	Providing varied and nutritious diets benefits animal health, even if handling food carries contamination risks.	Store animal food in sealed, labeled containers and monitor expiration dates. Implement protocols for cleaning feeding areas and bowls regularly. **(ALL)**	Animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Hazardous waste handling	Infections, chemical exposure, contamination	Providing veterinary care requires handling biological waste, but the benefits of treating sick animals outweigh the risks.	Establish protocols for the disposal of medical and biological waste. Provide appropriate PPE and training for staff handling such materials. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Heat stress	Dehydration, heatstroke, reduced animal welfare	Housing a variety of species with different climate needs ensures more animals can be rescued, even if temperature management is a challenge.	Maintain climate control systems to regulate temperature. Provide adequate ventilation and access to fresh water at all times. Monitor animals for signs of heat stress, especially during warmer months. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Inadequate ventilation	Respiratory infections, poor air quality, discomfort	Operating a high-capacity shelter helps more animals, even if ventilation challenges arise in crowded areas.	Regularly service HVAC systems to ensure proper airflow. Use air purifiers to reduce airborne contaminants and monitor air quality routinely. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Infectious disease outbreaks	Illness, rapid disease spread, quarantine needs	Sheltering animals in need means some will carry diseases, but refusing them would leave them without care.	Implement quarantine protocols for new or sick animals. Ensure regular vaccination and health checks, and maintain strict sanitation practices throughout the facility. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers, animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Lack of funding/resources	Inadequate care, limited medical supplies, staff shortages	Operating on limited budgets still saves lives, even if resources sometimes run low.	Diversify funding sources by combining grant applications, donor outreach, crowdfunding campaigns, and paid adoption or sponsorship programs. Establish partnerships with local businesses for sponsorships or in-kind donations. Regularly reassess budgeting to prioritize essential needs. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Noise-induced stress	Hearing damage, increased stress, behavioral issues	Housing multiple animals together maximizes shelter capacity and enables more rescues, even if it results in a noisy environment.	Designate quiet zones within the shelter. Use soundproofing materials in construction and provide animals with enrichment items to reduce stress-related behaviors. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Power outages	Loss of heating, cooling, lighting, medical equipment failure	Running a shelter 24/7 ensures animal safety, even if occasional power failures occur.	Install and maintain backup generators capable of running critical shelter functions, such as heating, cooling, and medical equipment. Store emergency lighting, battery-powered fans, and portable heating devices. Conduct staff training on power outage protocols to minimize disruptions. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Rodent infestations	Food contamination, disease transmission, structural damage	Storing food and supplies in bulk ensures long-term care availability, even if it attracts pests.	Implement integrated pest management strategies, including sealing gaps in walls, doors, and storage areas. Use rodent-proof containers for food and waste, set humane traps, and schedule regular pest inspections. Ensure proper disposal of waste to minimize attractants. **(ALL)**	Staff, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Slippery floors	Slips, trips, and falls	Keeping the shelter clean and sanitized is necessary to prevent disease, even if it creates occasional slip hazards.	Implement a regular cleaning schedule to promptly address spills and use non-slip mats in high-traffic areas. Ensure staff wear appropriate footwear with slip-resistant soles. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Vehicle accidents during transport	Collisions, animal injuries, transport delays	Transporting animals enables rescues and adoptions, even if road travel carries inherent risks.	Ensure all drivers are trained and vehicles are regularly maintained. Use appropriate restraints for animals during transport and plan routes to minimize travel time. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers, animals	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Volunteer or visitor injuries	Trips, falls, bites, allergic reactions	Allowing volunteers and visitors supports community involvement and increases adoptions, despite some risk of injury.	Provide thorough orientation and training for volunteers and clear guidelines for visitors. Supervise interactions between visitors and animals, especially in designated areas. **(ALL)**	Visitors, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Zoonotic disease transmission	Bacterial infections, viral infections, fungal infections	Caring for sick or injured animals increases the chance of rehabilitation and adoption, despite the risk of disease exposure.	Implement strict hygiene protocols, including regular handwashing, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and routine health screenings for animals. Educate staff on zoonotic diseases and their prevention. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Zoonotic parasites	Parasite transmission, skin infections, gastrointestinal issues	Treating animals with parasites is necessary for their rehabilitation, even if it exposes caregivers to mild infection risks.	Conduct regular deworming and parasite control programs, including routine fecal testing and targeted treatment schedules. Train staff on proper sanitation when handling infected animals and provide protective gloves. Maintain a quarantine area for new arrivals to prevent potential spread. **(ALL)**	Staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
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