Pet Adoption Events

Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Creates community engagement and volunteer opportunities to support shelters. | Encourages responsible pet ownership and lifelong animal care commitments. | Helps find loving homes for animals in need, reducing shelter overcrowding. | Provides opportunities for potential adopters to interact with animals before adopting. | Raises awareness about animal welfare issues and the benefits of adoption. | Reduces the number of stray and abandoned animals through adoption initiatives.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Aggressive behavior between animals	Fights, injuries, increased stress for all animals present	Allows a variety of animals, including those that need separate handling, to be showcased rather than excluded from adoption events.	Conduct pre-event assessments to determine which animals are social and which should remain separated. Use barriers to prevent direct contact between animals from different households. Rotate animals to limit stress, and assign one handler per animal for close supervision. Have emergency separation equipment such as spray bottles or noise distractions ready. **(ALL)**	Animals, event staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Aggressive or disruptive attendees	Verbal altercations, physical confrontations, safety risks to staff and animals	Allows the event to remain open to the public without excessive restrictions while ensuring a safe experience for all attendees.	Train staff and volunteers to recognize early signs of disruptive behavior. Implement a clear behavioral policy and post signage outlining expected conduct. Station security personnel at key locations and have a discreet removal protocol for individuals causing disturbances. Maintain a safe distance between high-stress areas and the main crowd. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Allergic reactions	Respiratory distress, skin irritation, anaphylaxis in severe cases	Enables more people to attend and engage with animals despite potential allergic sensitivities, increasing exposure and adoption opportunities.	Display clear signage at all entrances warning of potential allergens such as pet dander and hay. Provide a designated low-exposure area where attendees can observe animals without direct contact. Ensure first aid kits are stocked with antihistamines, and staff are trained to recognize and respond to allergic reactions. Communicate allergy risks in pre-event materials. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Animal bites or scratches	Injury to attendees, stress or defensive reactions from animals	Allows people to interact with animals directly, forming emotional connections that increase adoption rates.	Implement mandatory training for staff and volunteers on safe animal handling techniques, including recognizing body language cues that indicate distress. Conduct temperament assessments before the event and assign warning labels for reactive animals. Provide gloves and long-sleeved clothing for handling certain animals. Ensure an emergency first aid station is equipped for minor injuries. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Animal escapes	Animals running loose, difficulty recovering them, potential injury	Allows animals to be showcased in a way that encourages natural movement and interaction, improving potential adopters' confidence in their behavior.	Keep animals in secure enclosures with double gates or barriers to prevent direct exits. Ensure all collars and harnesses are properly fitted before the event. Assign trained handlers to supervise at all times, and place a physical barrier (such as fencing) around the perimeter. Have a documented escape response protocol, including designated "catchers" and emergency shut-off of doors/gates. **(ALL)**	Animals, event staff, attendees	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Animal stress or anxiety	Increased fear and aggression, reduced chances of adoption	Allows animals to be exposed to potential adopters in a real-world environment while minimizing psychological distress.	Limit the number of interactions per animal to avoid overstimulation. Designate quiet rest areas where animals can retreat. Use calming aids such as pheromone diffusers or background music. Train staff to recognize early signs of stress (whining, excessive grooming, tail tucking) and intervene by removing the animal if necessary. **(ALL)**	Animals, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Foodborne illnesses	Food poisoning from improper storage, allergic reactions	Enhances the overall experience by allowing attendees to stay longer, increasing their chances of adopting an animal.	Require food vendors to comply with local health regulations, including proper food storage and hygiene practices. Provide clearly labeled allergen information and require staff handling food to wear gloves. Establish designated eating areas away from animal enclosures to reduce contamination risks. Regularly sanitize surfaces and trash disposal areas. **(ALL)**	Attendees, food vendors, event staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Heat stress in animals	Dehydration, overheating, risk of heatstroke	Allows animals to attend events in warmer weather, increasing their chances of being adopted rather than waiting for cooler seasons.	Schedule events during cooler times of the day, and ensure all animals have access to well-ventilated shaded areas. Provide multiple fresh water stations with spill-proof bowls. Monitor animals regularly for signs of heat exhaustion (panting, lethargy) and have cooling aids (like damp cloths or fans) available. Assign volunteers to rotate animals to prevent overexposure. **(ALL)**	Animals, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Inadequate emergency preparedness	Delayed response to fires, medical emergencies, severe weather	Ensures that the event can proceed with confidence, reassuring both staff and attendees about safety measures.	Develop an emergency response plan covering scenarios such as fires, medical emergencies, and severe weather. Conduct staff training on evacuation procedures. Place emergency exits and first aid stations in clearly marked locations. Maintain communication with local emergency services and have a designated on-site emergency coordinator. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Inadequate parking or accessibility	Traffic congestion, difficulty for disabled attendees, reduced attendance	Increases attendance by making the event accessible to a broader audience, including families and individuals with mobility challenges.	Designate specific parking areas, including accessible spots for disabled attendees. Arrange for directional signage and traffic flow management. If the venue has limited parking, offer a shuttle service or communicate alternative transport options. Ensure pathways are accessible for wheelchairs and strollers. **(ALL)**	Attendees, event organizers, local residents	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Inadequate sanitation	Increased risk of illness, unpleasant environment, contamination from animal waste	Allows public events to be held in various locations, including indoor and outdoor spaces, without compromising hygiene standards.	Establish a cleaning schedule to maintain hygiene throughout the event. Ensure waste disposal stations are available for animal waste, food scraps, and general litter. Provide handwashing stations with soap and water, and require volunteers to clean animal enclosures and surfaces frequently. Use pet-safe disinfectants in all high-contact areas. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Inadequate volunteer training	Improper handling of animals, poor customer interaction, safety breaches	Ensures the event runs smoothly and professionally, increasing public trust and the likelihood of future adoption events.	Develop a mandatory training program covering animal handling, customer interaction, safety protocols, and emergency response. Require all volunteers to complete the training before the event and attend a pre-event briefing. Assign experienced mentors to guide new volunteers and oversee their tasks. **(ALL)**	Volunteers, attendees, animals	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Lack of shade or seating for attendees	Discomfort in hot weather, attendee fatigue, reduced event duration	Increases attendee comfort, encouraging them to stay longer and engage more deeply with available animals.	Provide shaded rest areas with seating for attendees, especially in outdoor events. Set up water stations and ensure cooling options like misting fans are available in hot weather. Encourage attendees to take breaks to prevent fatigue. Adjust event schedules to avoid peak heat hours. **(ALL)**	Attendees, event staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Lost children	Children becoming separated from guardians, emotional distress, safety risks	Enables families to attend the event without excessive concern, increasing overall attendance and adoption opportunities.	Implement a check-in system where families with children receive wristbands with contact details. Assign a secure "lost child area" and train staff to follow a designated protocol. Make periodic loudspeaker announcements reminding parents to supervise children. Provide high-visibility vests for designated child safety staff. **(ALL)**	Children, parents, event staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Noise levels affecting animals	Increased animal stress, disruptive behaviors, difficulty in adoption interactions	Allows animals to be in a bustling event environment without excessive stress, increasing their visibility and chances of adoption.	Use sound barriers or designate quiet zones for noise-sensitive animals. Schedule music, announcements, and other loud activities away from pet enclosures. Educate attendees on keeping noise levels low around animals, and use calming aids such as white noise machines or soft background music to mask disruptive sounds. **(ALL)**	Animals, potential adopters, event staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Overcrowding	Difficulty navigating the venue, increased stress for animals, risk of accidents	Ensures a lively and engaging atmosphere that increases event participation and excitement while keeping attendees safe.	Set a maximum attendee capacity for the venue based on its square footage and emergency exit accessibility. Use timed entry slots or a ticketing system to control foot traffic. Position staff at key points to monitor crowd density and redirect people if areas become congested. Have a backup plan, such as opening additional spaces or using a queuing system to prevent bottlenecks. **(ALL)**	Attendees, event staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Poor waste management	Unhygienic conditions, bad odors, environmental contamination	Allows events to be held in public spaces with minimal environmental impact, securing permissions for future adoption events.	Set up clearly labeled waste stations for animal waste, food scraps, and recyclables. Assign volunteers to conduct routine trash collection and disposal. Use durable waste bags and pet-safe disinfectants for cleaning contaminated areas. Place animal waste disposal areas away from high-traffic zones to minimize odors and contamination. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Slip and trip hazards	Falls caused by loose cables, wet surfaces, uneven ground	Allows events to be held in a range of indoor and outdoor venues, making pet adoption accessible to more communities.	Regularly inspect the venue for loose cables, spilled water, and animal waste, ensuring all are promptly cleaned up. Use non-slip flooring or mats in areas prone to becoming wet. Clearly mark steps, uneven surfaces, and high-traffic areas with caution tape or signs. Assign staff to conduct routine checks and address hazards immediately. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Theft or unauthorized removal of animals	Animals being stolen, risk of animals being placed in unsafe homes	Allows public access to animals while ensuring legitimate adoptions, preventing theft and unauthorized removals.	Use an adoption verification process requiring photo ID and paperwork before any animal leaves the premises. Assign security personnel to monitor exits and check adoption receipts. Use numbered identification tags that correspond to official adoption records. Keep valuable or high-demand animals in staffed areas. **(ALL)**	Animals, adoption staff, security personnel	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Tripping hazards from leashes, crates, or pet supplies	Slips, falls, injuries due to cluttered event areas	Allows attendees and handlers to move freely, reducing barriers to engaging with animals and increasing adoption chances.	Ensure leashes do not extend across walkways and train handlers to manage slack properly. Secure crates in designated areas and prevent clutter around entrances. Use bright-colored tape to mark uneven surfaces or step changes. Conduct regular walk-throughs to identify and remove obstacles. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Unsupervised interactions between children and animals	Children being bitten, scratched, or frightened, animals experiencing stress	Allows children to engage with animals safely, fostering positive early experiences with pets and increasing family adoptions.	Establish a designated child-friendly petting zone with trained volunteers supervising interactions. Provide signage and verbal reminders about proper handling techniques. Restrict access to animals that may react unpredictably to sudden movements. Encourage parents to remain with their children at all times. **(ALL)**	Children, animals, event staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Weather-related hazards (heat, rain, wind, cold)	Heat exhaustion in animals, wet and muddy conditions, wind-related hazards	Allows outdoor adoption events to proceed despite changing weather, expanding opportunities for public engagement.	Have contingency plans in place for extreme weather, including tents for rain and shaded areas for hot conditions. Monitor weather forecasts closely and inform attendees of potential changes. Provide water, blankets, or fans as needed for both animals and attendees. Ensure electrical equipment is waterproofed or covered. **(ALL)**	Animals, attendees, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Zoonotic disease transmission	Spread of diseases from animals to humans, increased health risks	Encourages hands-on interactions that help potential adopters form bonds with animals while minimizing health risks.	Ensure all animals are up to date on vaccinations and recently examined by a veterinarian. Require handwashing before and after handling animals, with hand sanitizing stations clearly marked throughout the venue. Disinfect shared surfaces such as tables, enclosures, and leashes frequently. Limit the number of people interacting with each animal to reduce cross-contamination. **(ALL)**	Attendees, staff, volunteers	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Inadequate animal identification	Animals getting lost, mix-ups between shelters, difficulty tracking adopted animals	Ensures that potential adopters can easily track and inquire about animals they connect with, improving adoption rates.	Equip each animal with a visible ID tag including its name, microchip number, and relevant health information. Keep a detailed event log of all animals present, noting their location and assigned handlers. Use brightly colored collars or harnesses to distinguish animals from different shelters or adoption statuses. **(ALL)**	Animals, staff, potential adopters	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Public misunders tanding of pet care requirements	Higher rate of returned or abandoned pets, adopter dissatisfaction	Ensures animals are adopted into responsible homes, reducing the risk of returned or neglected pets.	Provide informational booths with brochures on pet care responsibilities, breed-specific needs, and estimated costs of ownership. Require potential adopters to complete a short questionnaire about their lifestyle and pet experience. Offer on-site Q&A sessions with veterinarians or adoption coordinators. **(ALL)**	Potential adopters, animals, shelter staff	Before Measure: **Med** 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