



Branch News Attachment

for the monthly Newsletter of the Western and Southern Cape branches of the SAVA

Except from: **Veterinary Disaster Response** edited by Wingfield and Palmer

Link to the book: <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0813810140.html>

Chapter 3.2 by Gregory A Rich on Preparing your practice for an impending disaster



The most common types of natural disasters are floods and fires (forest, man made, arson or electrical fires). To current knowledge, terrorist attacks have not yet damaged any veterinary clinic or hospital.

When evacuating feline, avian or exotic patients a transport cage must be at hand for every cage in which there is an animal. Make sure when animals leave the building that a copy of their records, medication and enough food for each animal for 3 days go along with the animal.

Watertight food containers are a must for the transport of food to another location. Pertinent medical supplies such as heating pads, syringes and oxygen must be sent with the person evacuating the animals. Consider fresh water supply as well. Patient records with client information are critical for each pet to ensure early notification and reuniting with the owner or relatives. All paperwork must also be placed in watertight containers or resealable plastic bags

Human safety is always paramount in any emergency. Smooth evacuation is only possible if the disaster plan for the facility includes a schedule of duties to be carried out by the staff and everyone knows their responsibility. This include the evacuation box for the safe transport of vital legal, financial and insurance documents, real estate papers with architectural drawings and employee contracts and contact information. An evacuation box check list is very handy to prevent leaving and losing important documents.

If time permits, moving computers and/or making back-ups on flash drives (or external hard drives for the entire computer system) of client data and other documents is advised. Preferably send two sets of back-ups with 2 different team leaders. The permanent storage of offsite backups of client and patients data is another valuable protective measure against loss during a disaster. Using digital cameras, taking picture records of the facility and its content can easily be performed and could be valuable for post disaster use.

When facing flood damage all electrical cords should be unplugged and equipment in reception and waiting room areas should be put on counter height. Pet foods and retail supplies should be moved to the highest shelf. All movable and vital medical equipment such as microscopes, ultrasound machines, autoclaves, video equipment, blood analysers etc., should be moved to an inside storage closet and off the floor. Outside windows and doors should be secured and boarded if required and time permits.

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