



BRANCH NEWS

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 3.1 by Joan C Casey on Family versus business during a disaster

75% of pet owners will refuse to evacuate in a disaster if their pet(s) are not safe. And it will be expected that services will be available for pets during a disaster. This will emotionally and psychologically affect a responder, veterinary hospital and humane society.

Emergency responses will vary depending on the community. Rural communities have a tradition of working together, to respond to an emergency. Urban communities are less closely knit.

Do you have an emergency plan for your hospital/clinic?

Who will be responsible for turning off any utilities such as the gas and the anesthetic gas tanks?

Is there emergency lighting and a reserve supply of water available at the clinic?

Are there enough pharmaceuticals on hand to last several days?

Does your staff know the emergency plan and their respective roles therein?

Discuss the plan regularly at staff meetings and hold practice scenarios. When possible, involve a local animal response team* to help familiarize them with the clinic.

How will animals be evacuated from the clinic / hospital?

Ensure that staff knows the location and proper use of transport cages, cat bags, pillow cases (handy for transporting cats or even snakes), leashes and crates. Make provision for other animals, such as reptiles, birds, small mammals, or exotics that might be in the clinic.

Know which vehicles are available to move the critters.

Ensure that everyone knows the location where the animals will be moved and how to get there safely.

* Ed note: There is currently no emergency animal response team structure in SA. This is possibly something to initiate between neighbouring practices and animal welfare organisations on own initiative.

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