

**BOARD OF
ANIMAL SERVICES
COMMISSIONERS**

LARRY GROSS
PRESIDENT

OLIVIA E. GARCIA
VICE PRESIDENT

COMMISSIONERS

ALISA FINSTEN

JOSE SANDOVAL

ROGER WOLFSON

City of Los Angeles
CALIFORNIA



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

**DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SERVICES**
221 N. Figueroa Street
6TH Floor, Suite #600
Los Angeles, CA 90012

(888) 452-7381
FAX (213) 482-9511

BRENDA F. BARNETTE
GENERAL MANAGER

TAMMY WATSON
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
Administration

MELISSA WEBBER
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
Lifesaving

DR. JEREMY PRUPAS
CHIEF VETERINARIAN

November 8, 2019

Council File 14-0730-S1
Council District: 7th, Monica Rodriguez
Contact Person and Phone Number:
Karen Knipscheer Cox, (213) 505-5668

The Honorable Eric Garcetti
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Ms. Heleen Ramirez, Office of the Mayor

**TRANSMITTAL: REPORT BACK ON EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN FOR EQUINE AND
LARGE ANIMALS**

The General Manager of the Department of Animal Services respectfully requests that the Mayor and City Council:

NOTE AND FILE this report.

SUMMARY

On December 5, 2017, the Creek Fire broke out near Sylmar and in Los Angeles County, 30 horses were killed in the fires path. Wildfires are a constant threat to communities in the foothills, and pose a significant threat to not only people but the animals in their care. Councilmember Rodriguez tasked Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS), Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to report on strategies to increase cooperation and partnerships between the City and the equestrian community on evacuations, as more should be to ensure that owners or horses or other large animals can be evacuated during future emergencies. This report should include where we were then and where we are today, what LAAS has done to improve on the relationships with LAFD and LAPD and how these partnerships are working together.

"Creating a Humane LA"

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Visit our website at www.LAAnimalServices.com

ACTIONS

The Los Angeles Animal Services Emergency Operations has been reassigned to Commander Knipscheer Cox, who has thirty years of experience working all disasters pertaining to Los Angeles. Ms. Knipscheer Cox meets regularly with LAFD and LAPD, and collectively they are building a cohesive working relationship. LAFD, LAPD and Emergency Management Department (EMD) will ensure that Animal Services is contacted immediately during any necessary disaster call up. A decision-making representative from the LAAS will respond to the Command Center as soon as able, and be on hand to provide direction on the next steps to take. It was agreed that early evacuation notification will go out to the residential large animal areas that may be affected.

As evacuations are under the control of LAPD, LAAS is under their guidance. Both agencies partner as a team to evacuate people and animals together at the same time. LAAS has also partnered with LAPD Mounted Unit, to increase their capabilities to evacuate more animals with more trailers, and this has proven to be successful for the Creek and Woolsey Fires, and most recently the Saddlebridge and Getty Fires.

LAAS administers an educational program to provide field training to the citizens of Los Angeles by going to their ranches and/or homes and teaching them about large animal evacuations and how to load these sometimes difficult animals. LAPD Mounted Unit assists in these trainings. LAAS also provides microchip clinics for large animals to these same citizens.

LAAS reintroduced the Volunteer Emergency Evacuation Response Team (VEERT), and provided training to thirty two willing citizens of Los Angeles who will provide assistance during a disaster at any one of the locations where the evacuation of animals occur. These volunteers assist in completing paperwork, caring for the animals, being a spotter for a trailer team, and/or driving their own horse trailers to evacuate animals. VEERT is a valuable resource to the team.

LAAS signed a Mutual Aid Agreement with Los Angeles County Animal Control to assist during large scale disasters when it has been proclaimed. They can provide us by providing personnel at our evacuation sites to assist in feeding, cleaning and caring for the animals impacted to alleviate our staff to further enhance our capabilities to complete evacuations.

We have three large emergency evacuation sites for large animals, Pierce College, Hansen Dam and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with Pierce College, that the Emergency Operations Coordinator for LAAS can request them to open their site for our use at any time, and our staff will be there to coordinate the intake of the animals and to care for any animals. Hansen Dam and Los Angeles Equestrian Center properties are both owned by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), but have concessioners' on the property. RAP has coordinating agreements with both of those properties to be used during any emergency. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) state that at any time we have to open one of these facilities, the EMD duty officer will contact the RAP duty officer who will contact the operations manager at either one of those sites and advise them Animal Services is in need of the facility. LAAS will support this by sending staff to coordinate the intake of animals, and caring for those animals. RAP will also send a representative to coordinate and assist. LAAS has coordinated with the operations managers at these two facilities, who will assist in the preparing for intake of animals, including paperwork in case of animals arriving prior to staff, and be ready for LAAS staff to arrive on scene. LAAS now has a Conex container on Hansen Dam property and a bin at LA Equestrian with a supply of necessary equipment and paperwork to coordinate the intake of these animals, and to care for them.

The equestrian community for LaTuna Canyon, Sunland and Shadow Hills area has been working on a self-evacuation plan to evacuate their own animals early on to the private property of Vulcan Materials (Sun Valley), who has given five (5) acres to use during an emergency to tie out their own equine and care for them there. This will help the City to have fewer animals to evacuate and care for if this area is impacted again.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact on the General Fund varies and is based upon the nature of the disaster. However, through accurate record-keeping, the City will be reimbursed by FEMA during a declared disaster. Ensuring that the animals receive the care during a disaster is mandated by the State, and therefore we take great care to ensure their safety and comfort.

Respectfully submitted,



Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager